UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF LADY BULWER LYTTON TO A. E. CHALON

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UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF LADY BULWER LYTTON TO A. E. CHALON, R.A.

Rebecca Sophia Clarke

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WITH AN
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY
S. M. ELLIS

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LONDON
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ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

THE recent publication of Lord Lytton's authoritative biography of his grandfather, Edward Bulwer, first Lord Lytton, has once more directed attention to the dominant factor of the novelist's life — his unhappy marriage. The present generation has little conception of the prominence in the public press and mind accorded to the matrimonial differences of Sir Edward and Lady Bulwer Lytton sixty years ago. The papers were ever full of reports of legal actions, and paragraphs inspired by the conflicting parties, who were naturally a general topic of conversation in all circles of society. It would be an unpleasant and supererogatory task to recount in full detail the facts of this disastrous marriage. Lord Lytton has related its history as much as is necessary, no doubt:

but it may not be inopportune, by way of supplement to his record, to throw some further light, by means of her correspondence, on Lady Bulwer Lytton's life and state of mind subsequent to the separation. Her point of view needs attention. She was undoubtedly in the beginning a much injured woman, for her husband was unfaithful, selfish, exacting, and absurdly egotistical; but as the years of misery seared her soul deeper and deeper, her mind became obsessed by her wrongs and, at times, thrown off the balance of reason. Her subsequent campaign of virulent attacks upon her husband in speech and letter and printed book cannot be defended, however great the original provocation. She ceased to have any sense of discrimination and justice, and abused and vilified every one who happened to be a friend of Bulwer Lytton. This trait will be fully illustrated in her letters. But—apart from the subject of her wrongs—her sense of humour remained to the end, and despite troubles, want of money, and perennial ill-health, her letters are full of wit and descriptive power,

throwing many amusing—if rather ill-natured—sidelights on her contemporaries.

Before briefly recapitulating the details of Lady Bulwer Lytton's life, it must be pointed out that the statements in the book written in vindication of her memory by her executrix, Miss Louisa Devey, in 1887, do not always coincide with those given by the present Lord Lytton.

Rosina Doyle Wheeler, born on November 2, 1802, at Ballywire, Co. Limerick, was the daughter of Francis Massy Wheeler * by his wife Anna, daughter of Archdeacon Doyle, her parents both being under the age of nineteen when they married. Rosina's early years were spent in a typical Irish home of that time, a great rambling house going to decay, amid an atmosphere of shiftlessness, disorder, fox-hunting, and hard drinking. At the age of ten she accompanied her mother on a prolonged visit to Mrs. Wheeler's uncle, Sir John Doyle, Governor of Guernsey, a post then of considerable importance. In 1816 he retired and went

* His mother was a daughter of the first Lord Massy.

to live in London, with his grand-niece Rosina; her mother betaking herself to Paris and Caen, where she indulged in the society of freethinkers and socialists. It thus came about that Rosina Wheeler had a degree of freedom unusual for girls of that period, for by the time she was twenty-three she was accustomed to go out unaccompanied to social functions. She formed one of the Bohemian, literary set which circled round Miss Landon and Lady Caroline Lamb; and it was at a party of this description, in April 1826, that she met her fate in the person of Edward Bulwer, then a brilliant young man of twenty-two, on the threshold of his literary fame.

There is no reason to doubt that in the days of his courtship Bulwer was intensely in love with Rosina Wheeler, albeit the attraction was probably altogether of a physical nature, for the girl was extremely beautiful and of superb figure. From the outset Bulwer's worldly-wise mother was opposed to the match and refused her consent, for she foresaw that this brilliant, witty, rather lax and coarse-minded girl was not a

suitable wife for her favourite son, whose unstable qualities were much the same as Miss Wheeler's. Three times the engagement was broken off, and as often renewed. It is not easy to gather what Rosina's feelings in the affair exactly were. She submitted to the dictatorial intervention of her future mother-in-law without much protest. Probably, too, in her case the sensual side predominated. At any rate, she gave herself fully to Bulwer, and they contracted an illicit "tie which made marriage a necessity." Henceforth, though passion was spent, Bulwer regarded the marriage as an inevitable reparation to the woman he had wronged; and so, at last defying his mother's commands, he was married to Rosina Wheeler in August 1827. Both the partners to this inauspicious union knew they did not truly love each other and that the future was foredoomed, for Bulwer had written some months earlier to Miss Wheeler: "I now look to the hereafter, and I tremble at the prospect . . . Separate yourself from me before it be too late. . . . Save yourself from a love from which

you yourself only anticipate disappointment and regret, and where the very passion that can alone afford us the strength to hope may only end in your despair."

For the first few years, however, they were tolerably happy, living at Woodcot House, in Oxfordshire—a fine house surrounded by a well-timbered park—and later at 36, Hertford Street. Both husband and wife were extravagant, and with an actual income of about £500 a year lived at the rate of £3000. Bulwer's mother injudiciously stopped her son's allowance, and it came about that he was compelled to maintain his establishment by the labours of his pen. He was now a popular novelist, and needed quiet and solitude for his incessant imaginative work. His wife resented his preoccupation and absences. Remonstrances and reproaches led to arguments and quarrels. A constant atmosphere of irritation surrounded husband and wife, culminating even in shocking physical violence and outrage on Bulwer's part.* This naturally led to a

* In particular, Lady Bulwer Lytton accused her husband of kicking her violently in the side about a month before the

BULWER LYTTON
When about thirty years of age

separation. But in those days Mrs. Bulwer was forgiving and still fond of her husband. She would write abject, penitent letters—though her offence had only been a too sharp, caustic tongue—and there would be reconciliations, only to be followed by more violent disagreements and appalling scenes. Each fresh quarrel dulled the embers of expiring love, soon to turn to the grey ashes of hate.*

birth of her daughter in 1828, and of biting her cheek in a fit of frenzical anger in 1834. Unhappily this latter incident cannot be denied, for Bulwer wrote to his wife a day or so after the assault: "You have been cruelly outraged, and I stand eternally degraded in my own eyes. I do not for a moment blame you for the publicity which you gave to an affront nothing but frenzy can extenuate. . . . I am now convinced of what I have long believed: I am only fit to live alone. God and Nature afflicted me with unsocial habits, weak nerves, and violent passions. . . . I do not ask your forgiveness, which I know you would readily give. . . . For six years you have been to me an incomparable wife. That thought alone is sufficient to make me judge you leniently in the last year. . . ." His wife not only gave her forgiveness unasked, but went down to Richmond and humbled herself to beg her husband to return to her; and, moreover, told her servants that she had been to blame for the scene they had witnessed.

* The present Lord Lytton writes thus of the state of affairs between his grandparents before the final separation:

"Little by little they drifted apart. They seldom met, and

Introduction

The last house that Bulwer and his wife occupied nominally together (1835–36) was Berrymead Priory, Acton, situated at the entrance to the village on the high road from London, from which it was separated by open fields until Notting Hill and Bayswater—then but conglomerations of a few houses and cottages—were reached. The Priory, which had been the seat of Lord Halifax and the Duke of Kingston in the two previous centuries, was a picturesque building with Gothic embellishments, and its charming grounds were secluded from the outer

when they were together his nervous irritability vented itself at every unwelcome circumstance in complaints or taunts or fits of anger. At first Mrs. Bulwer exercised great forbearance. To harsh words and unjust reproaches she returned meek replies. She was studious to please him, and endeavoured, as far as possible, to anticipate his wishes. Her attitude increased his gratitude and devotion to her, and he reproached himself bitterly whenever he realised that he had wronged her; but the pangs of conscience only added to his mental strain, and the exigencies of his daily existence left him no time to make amends. Their quarrels were followed by reconciliations and apologies, but each one left a scar behind upon the delicate surface of their affections, which served to remind them of the wounds by which their love was being gradually destroyed."

world by high walls. Here Mrs. Bulwer led a solitary life, for her husband really lived at his chambers in the Albany, and only visited at Berrymead. A friend who was staying with his wife at the Priory relates: "Mr. Bulwer came but seldom to visit us, but expecting him was his poor wife's greatest pleasure and amusement. . . . Notwithstanding, we would not have sat down to dinner five minutes, before she would say the most insulting things to him. These I often saw him try to bear, and when they at last produced the effect of putting him in a rage, she was sorry." Mrs. Bulwer could be more actively annoying, if the following story emanating from Miss Landon can be credited. Dr. Kenealy related in his autobiography that Dr. Maginn wrote to him: "Mrs. M. relates, on the authority of Miss Landon, that she and Lady B. were once in the latter's dressing-room. L. E. L., observing a beautiful shirt before the fire, began to admire it, for it was fripperied with lace, and many fine adornments of needlework, etc. etc. Lady B. observing her evident admiration of the tunic

asked, 'Do you really think it beautiful?' 'Yes,' says L. E. L., 'very beautiful indeed; I never saw anything like it before.' Lady B. said, 'See,' and putting the shirt into the fire, she covered it up with burning coals and reduced it to tinder in a few minutes. 'Bulwer's rage, when he called for his shirt soon after, may, as the newspapers say, be more easily imagined than described." It will be seen later that Miss Landon was particularly a friend of Bulwer Lytton and not of his wife.

So this lamentable drama of "incompatibility of temper"—in the glib legal phrase—was enacted to its painful end, and two people, who might by a little consideration and self-sacrifice have lived peaceably if not happily, forged their own galling chains of misery and remorse.

After each violent quarrel, Mrs. Bulwer would be left alone. She occupied her loneliness with the care of her two children (then aged seven and four) and developing the Priory garden. For a time she kept a journal of her sad thoughts, and a few brief extracts may be given here.

Introduction

BERRYMEAD PRIORY, ACTON.

December 13, 1835.

What a life mine has been! A sunless childhood; a flowerless youth; and certainly a fruitless womanhood. . . . I hate looking back on the last eight years of my life; I so thoroughly despise myself for having wasted so much affection, zeal, and devotion on so *worthless* an object. I forgot that nothing ever takes root in a stone but weeds; those of pride and selfishness are rooted there with a vengeance, and yet the eternal complaining of want of *sympathy!* Sympathy must be *given* before it can be received, just as *respect* must be paid before it can be expected in return. . . .

I dread going to bed, for there this gnawing pain and low fever consume me. I cannot sleep, and therefore cannot dream, which makes loneliness doubly lonely, for dreams are a sort of phantasmagoria of life . . . if they are happy ones they . . . bring tidings of those we love from the happy, sunny past.

December 22. . . . Went out for the first time these ten days; described to the gardener about making the flowerpots into baskets, and

dug the first circle of the Northern Star* myself. . . . Came home; had a greater bevy than ever of robins in my room. . . . Played upon the guitar for an hour, and sang many songs I had heard or dreamt.

February 20. My jailer returned with his amiable epicurean debauchee friend, Mr. Frederick Villiers,† after a *five weeks'* absence; and ill as I have been, too, he could not be here one day alone.

March 1. From crying, coughing, and violent agitation, I have burst a small blood-vessel. Oh, my God! my God! when will You take me?

The illogical state of the poor lady's mind is attested above, where in the same sentence she calls her husband her jailer and yet complains of his absence. She grew to be very fond of Berrymead Priory and its garden, and when fresh matrimonial quarrels led Bulwer to propose

* A new flower-bed.

† Frederick Villiers was the natural son of a Mr. Meynell by a girl of high rank. He was very original and gifted, and suggested a good deal of the character of *Pelham* to his friend Bulwer.

BERRYMEAD PRIORY, ACTON

another separation, and his wife's removal to Bath or elsewhere, she was very reluctant to leave Acton. She wrote to her husband:

"I am quite prepared for your thinking me the meanest wretch alive, that upon the fourth time of your expressing your determination to get rid of me, I should cringe and beg of you to try me once more; but this is more a weakness of body than mind. I am quite unable to move. . . . I can do nothing but sit down and cry when I think of finally leaving this place, incapable as I am of all exertion. . . . God must effect the separation you so pant for very soon, as permanently as you can desire. . . . Before I got your first letter . . . I had drawn a plan for the gardener to alter the lawn. I am told it looks very pretty. The man he has had to help him I have regularly paid and also the osiers he has had to make the baskets with: so whatever happens they have no bill to bring in to you. You will not even have to fee the *sexton*: for not liking to trust to contingencies, he has very prudently dunned me beforehand for a Xmas box. God bless you, and may you hereafter be as happy as I have

made you the reverse, and may I soon be at rest."

Bulwer was always moved by his wife's pictures of ill-health and death, and so he replied, "Remain then at Acton, and let us forget the object of our late correspondence; we will try once more." Alas! it was in vain. The last effort was futile, and this act of the long tragedy was nearing the end. Bulwer was openly unfaithful to his wife, and a violent scene in connection with his liaison led to the final separation of husband and wife, which was officially completed and signed in April 1836.* Henceforth it was implacable hatred and *combat à outrance*, and both vied in abuse and persecution of the other.

For the next two years Mrs. Bulwer lived in Ireland with her children, Emily and Robert (sub-

* Mrs. Bulwer left Berrymead Priory finally in June. The house of sad memories still stands, but amid very different surroundings, for the garden and grounds wherein Mrs. Bulwer took so much interest have long since been destroyed, and covered with artisan dwellings and the municipal buildings of Acton.

sequently first Earl of Lytton), who were, however, removed from her charge in 1838. They were, of course, involved in their parents' misery. The daughter died of typhus fever in Pelham Terrace, Brompton, a lodging-house, when twenty years of age, in 1848, and her mother only saw her once—in a state of unconsciousness—before the end. This event caused fresh recriminations, which became public property, between the parents. Of her son the mother saw nothing for twenty years, for he was interdicted from communicating with her; she sent him, when he was a boy of fifteen, a watch and chain with a miniature of herself attached, but the gifts were returned by the father's agent with an intimation that no more parcels were desired.

From 1838 Lady Bulwer (as she had now become by the creation of her husband's baronetcy *) lived a wandering life in Bath, Paris, Florence, and Geneva; she had many troubles and adventures, and throughout believed herself

* The name of Lytton was added in 1844, on Bulwer's succession to his mother's estate.

exposed to the unremitting persecution and espionage of her husband's agents, whom she alleged were ever seeking to entrap her in some compromising position, or to steal her papers. There is no doubt that an attempt of the latter description was made in Paris in 1840, as the reports in the contemporary press show: but probably Lady Bulwer Lytton's disturbed state of mind caused her to exaggerate the other annoyances she experienced, particularly in later years, and to attribute every mischance of life to her husband's malice. In return she wrote various *romans à clef* depicting Bulwer Lytton and his friends in an uncomplimentary light. Lady Bulwer Lytton returned to England in 1847, and instituted proceedings to obtain an increase of the allowance of £400 a year she received from her husband. She had a few faithful friends, among them Elizabeth Countess of Harrington, Miss Kate Planché (a daughter of the dramatist), and Mrs. Carlyle. The last-named seems to have sympathised fully with her friend's case, for writing, from Cheyne Row, to Lady Bulwer Lytton she said:

"After all you have told me, and with all my ardent *esprit de corps*, what excited in me the *realest*, the most *human* sympathy for you, is this brave eagerness to do *anything* in *honesty* for the discharge of your involuntary debts. Surely if we fail to give you any furtherance in this good purpose of yours, it shall not be for want of earnest wishing and trying.

"When you describe that man and his treatment of you, I feel *amazed* before the whole thing, as in the presence of the Infinite; it is all so diabolical—so out of the course of nature, that I, who have mercifully had to do with only imperfect *human* beings at *worst*, *never* with an incarnate devil, cannot *realise* it to myself, and cannot get any more intelligent impression from it than from a bad dream, or a Balzac novel.

"The very *inhumanness* of your wrongs makes it impossible for me to pity them after a right genuine human fashion; but when, not only superior to but defiant of fine Ladyism and 'all that sort of thing,' you speak resolutely of *helping* yourself, and set forth your *qualifications* for a *Housekeeper*, a Companion,—you brought up to be waited upon, and one of the *cleverest authoresses* in England!—then my whole practical Scotch

nature applauds you, and cries 'God speed you!' . . .

"My husband went to Murray that same day after seeing you, and tried him, he declares, on all tacks; even on that of appealing to his feelings of a gentleman. . . .

"Mr. C. is in 'The Valley of the Shadow of *Blue Pill*,' and won't go with me anywhere in the evenings—and I have no carriage—and can't afford flys, except like angel visits, 'few and far between!'"

Carlyle's efforts did not succeed in getting any of Lady Bulwer Lytton's books published by Murray. Her worries with other publishers were many. She entertained a lively hatred for them, reviewers, the Press, and all who offended her. On such subjects her letters and speech were vivaciously vindictive, for Lady Bulwer Lytton never feared to speak her mind freely.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF LADY BULWER LYTTON TO A. E. CHALON

On returning to England in 1847, Lady Bulwer Lytton stayed at first with her friends, the Rev. George and Mrs. Sandby, at Flixton Vicarage, in Suffolk, and with the Hon. Mrs. Leicester Stanhope (later Lady Harrington) at Ashburnham House. In 1848 she stayed with the assistant chaplain at the Tower of London, and then occupied apartments at 97, Sloane Street until 1851, in which year she removed to 13, Hans Place. It is at this date that Lady Bulwer Lytton's correspondence with A. E. Chalon, R.A., begins. The two brothers, Alfred and John Chalon,* were very successful and popular artists

* John James Chalon (1778–1854) and Alfred Edward Chalon (1780–1860) were members of a French family resident at Geneva since the time of the revoke of the Edict of Nantes. The two boys came to England in 1789 when their father was appointed Professor of French at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

in the second quarter of the last century, and Alfred, in particular, was noted for his fine and delicate drawings of feminine heads. He received much employment from his friend, Lady Blessington, and many examples of his art will be found in *The Keepsake* and *The Book of Beauty*. His best-remembered portrait, perhaps, is that of Queen Victoria, just after her coronation, standing at the top of a staircase.

With Lady Bulwer Lytton, A. E. Chalon shared a love of art and small dogs, and it is with these subjects and her sorrows and grievances that the following letters are largely concerned: throughout, however, an innate caustic wit and a kind heart often irradiate what is in the main a sad packet of letters from the dead past.

13, Hans Place,
September 11, 1851.

Dear Sir,—Anything you were good enough to do for me, were it no greater a matter than the little flower that grows up between the

crevices of poor Silvio Pellico's* prison, would be both interesting to, and valued by, me: but alas! for objects of special and deep interest; it has pleased God not to leave me *one.* Even my poor, darling, faithful dog Taff died last year, so that my heart remains cold and bare and dark, save *one* ray—the hope of heaven shining into it. But having always considered myself a lineal descendant of Job's (barring the patience which he *so mortgaged* that I have never been able to disencumber it!), like him, I have no heritage but to suffer *and endure.* . . .

I should deserve to be indicted by the nation for having defrauded it of one of its gems, could I allow myself to be tempted into accepting from your too great generosity so much of a *tableau* as the one you mention: a little pencil sketch of Mistletoe's† innocent head, in whose history I have been much interested, will be quite as great a tax as my conscience will permit me to levy on your kindness; and as I am *honorary* grandmother to all the Puppy-dogs I am sure Mistletoe will *dutifully* second my

* The Italian writer and patriot. He was imprisoned by the Austrians 1820–30.

† Chalon's dog.

wishes. There is a song called "The Mistletoe Bough," but I think there ought to be another called "The Mistletoe Bow-wow" dedicated to her. Though *Petless*, I am not Dogless, for going to church last Easter Sunday, I saw a collection of bones, barely covered by a Blenheim skin, being dragged along violently by a rope; and two large melancholy eyes looked up imploringly in my face. I told the boy who was pulling it after him that it was wicked to starve and ill-use anything in that way, and asked if this poor canine Jane Wilbred was for sale? He said he should be glad to sell it, and that its name was Tiber. So when poor Master Tiber was brought to me at six o'clock that day, I found he not only could not stand from weakness but was nearly skinned from the mange, so I sent him for six weeks to be cured to the man from whom I have my brougham. He is now a pretty little fellow, and I *try hard* to love him, but as yet only owe him a grudge for being in my poor darling, darling Taff's place, which he occupies without being able to fill; for my dear friend Taff had licked my tears for so many years that he seemed to feel and understand every sorrow I had: dear fellow! he had human

intelligence, and far more than human affection and unselfish fidelity.

Hoping that both you and your brother may derive every benefit from this charming weather by the sea-side, pray believe me, my dear sir, with best compliments to him, and a kiss to Miss Mistletoe, à laquelle M. Tiber presente ses baise-pattes et hommages respectueux,

Your greatly obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Poor Lady Bulwer Lytton, bereft of her children and compelled to expend her affections upon dogs, grew to love Tiber as much as his predecessor, and when his short life, in turn, came to an end six years later his mistress wrote:

"*November* 29, 1857.

"Truly say you, dear Dr. Price, about my poor little darling Tiber, whose loss I feel more and more every day. I at least, with the exception of your dear kind self and three more, could better have spared all my worthless acquaintances than that true-hearted, intelligent, faithful, darling dog. My last hope even seems to have died with him. For every evening I used to say my prayers over his innocent head with 'Never mind, my Tiber, *this* day is over,' and 'Sure I am that the Lord will avenge the poor and defend the cause of the helpless.' I have no kind darling eyes now to encourage me in this belief, so, having ceased to feel it, I have ceased to say it."

Devotion and kindness to children and all

animals was a prominent trait in Lady Bulwer Lytton's character. At the time, 1858, she was wrongfully confined in an asylum, at Inverness Lodge, Brentford, she relates—with the same characteristic humour, whatever the painful situation—of her jailer's daughter: "This dear little girl, my only companion while there, conceived the most violent affection for me, which I heartily returned, for she was a perfect star in the desert, and with a big, fat, magnificent tortoiseshell cat, with the most fascinating manners, a perfect feline Chesterfield, and the poor cow, which Hill used to leave in an arid field, under a vertical sun, without water (the pump being deranged, like his patients), were my only comforts; and as I and poor little Mary Hill used to pump for hours at this crazy pump, till we filled the stone trough for the poor cow, which used to bound and caper like a dog when it saw us coming to the rescue, *this* was, no doubt, considered as a strong proof of my insanity, or at least of my having water on the brain."

Lady Bulwer Lytton

13, HANS PLACE,
BELGRAVIA.

MY DEAR SIR,—I verily believe that one reason that makes English people so grumpy and disagreeable (after the fogs, beef, and bottled darkness of the land of Egypt in the abomination called porter) is that any amiability on the part of our neighbours, *as you now perceive*, makes us so very troublesome and encroaching; but at the risk of boring you I must thank you very sincerely for your kind note received this morning; with regard to your first offer of the Tarragon vinegar, toute aimable qu'elle soit, je ne l'accepte point pas si bête! vû que je suis déjà abreuvée de vinaigre!—mais encore plus parceque il n'y a qu'un Chalon au monde de sorte qui un croquis de lui! n'est pas de refus; and however indisputable a bore I may be, at all events you will not be throwing your pearls before swine, as no one could be more grateful or appreciate the promised drawing more highly than I shall do. . . .

As for my spirits, they are such as a person labouring under an *indigestion of misery* generally fabricates; but God's Will be done. We know

the Saviour is *always there*; but as he slept on earth, so—we sometimes fancy—that he *must* sleep in Heaven, and while he sleeps, alas! the storm rages.

With every good wish for your own and your brother's health, believe me, my dear sir,

Your sincerely obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

13, HANS PLACE,

October 6, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,—When you were here yesterday, I did not thank you *half* enough (indeed to do so would be *impossible*) for your beautiful and most magnificent present. The more I look at it, the more beautiful I think it; the idea is charming and the execution *à votre ordinaire exquisite*; the face is so lovely I am never tired of looking at it:

> The trembling lustre of the hair
> Seems radiant, radiant gold.
> The mouth is as a rosebud wet
> With summer's softest showers.
> Her eyes among the stars seem set,
> Her feet among the flowers.

Was this charming idea of *The Launch of the*

Homeward-bound your own? I suppose so, for I don't think anybody else could have thought of anything half so graceful, and you may imagine what a relief and delight it is to me to possess this gem instead of a great hulking English seventy-four! . . .

Your most grateful and obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

October 8, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,—It is very lucky that there are so few people in Town, for you have bestowed, I fear, a *fatal* gift upon me (as La dono plate di bellezza is always said to be) for *The Launch* has excited such admiration, with of course its shadow *envy*, that I run great risks of being robbed—the only misfortune my poverty has hitherto secured me against. Every one is so exquisitely amused, too, at my fears of *The Launch* before I saw this exquisite *Tableau de genre*, for, argued I, a ship even by Chalon will still be a ship! and though he may, and of course will, contrive to *spiritualise* it, I defy even him to *idealise* the obligato bottle of brandy to be thrown at the prow! Therefore you may believe that Noah never felt more re-

joiced and grateful at the *return* of the Dove than I did at its *arrival.* Would that it had a more worthy nest; however, pray believe it could not have one where it will be more cherished. I ought to apologise for boring you with another note, but having "bestowed my hand upon you" (!) you must take me for better, for worse. I only hope you won't find me worse than you took me for, which is generally the result of that proceeding. . . .

I hope you won't inflict my last book * either on yourself or your brother, as I fear you would both find it very puerile, and stupid. But here is a secret (which I am sure you won't mention, as I don't wish it known yet)—I have nearly finished one that I will also have the pleasure of sending you when out, and which I flatter myself you may like. I call it *Molière's Tragedy* † . . . as he really was, not as he has been caricatured. You need not be alarmed at the word Tragedy—for it can't well be too dull with the Court of Louis Quatorze, Mde. de Sévigné, Boileau, La Fontaine, Chapelle, and Ninon for *Dramatis Personae*—a relief at least from our wet-blanket English

* *Miriam Sedley*, 1850.

† Published under the title of *Molière's Life and Times; or, The School for Husbands*, 1851.

menages, where either men kick and cuff their wives, or else the equally bad extreme

> "Where the mistress-master rules
> And one's a fool, or both are fools."

With kind regards to your brother, and a kiss to La Norma Canina,

Ever, dear sir, your grateful and obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

October 10, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,—Here is the history (as far as I am acquainted with it) of the little hand. I bought it at the Marchese Ginon's for its beauty; they told me there that it was a model of our Queen's hand, but then the Italians are *almost* as profoundly and *extensively* ignorant on all subjects as the English; and though the Queen *has* a pretty hand, I don't think it can be *hers* for this reason: that though the Biscuit hand is small, still it is open and looks as if it *could give*, which every one knows *hers cannot!* But an aunt of our Queen's —who took it up one day on my table—and also the poor Princess Soltikoff and the Countess Marie de Warenzoff told me it was the model of their young Grand Duchess Olga's hand, who is as famed for her beautiful hands as she is for her

lovely face; and this I take to be the little hand's real identity.

Chalon wished to make a portrait of his correspondent, and in spite of the following "refusal," he executed a very charming drawing of Lady Bulwer Lytton the following year, 1852:*

No, indeed, my dear sir, were I as rich as Crœsus instead of as poor as Job, I would not allow you to waste your time and profane your *beau talent* by (as far as I am concerned) perpetrating an old woman's ugly face, and time has behaved as cruelly to me in that way as in every other. I am very much flattered and touched by your amiable offer all the same, but it is my high and real appreciation of your genius which prevents my consenting to your making so bad a use of it. If you knew all or even *half* that I have gone through, and *per mi disgrazia* am still going through, you would be convinced that I have no comedy in my *heart*, though, like many other poor drudges, I can do comic scenes "*to order.*"

* Reproduced in this work, as frontispiece.

Lady Bulwer Lytton

My friend will too gladly avail herself of your kind reproach to accompany me to your house* some other day; but having some odd sort of Paletot on yesterday, she said she looked too like a Scotch terrier for the Elegant Chalon, though she would have been the very thing for Landseer. . . . Do read Dumas' *Dame de Monsoreau*: it is charming. You will find scenes in it worthy of even yours and your brother's Pencil; and Chicot, le fou d'Henri Trois, is perfectly admirable.

Lady Bulwer Lytton speaks of her looks hyperbolically. She was only forty-nine at this date and exceptionally good-looking. Miss Planché describes her thus in 1847: "Her hair was of a beautiful dark brown, her eyes indescribable as to colour and expression, ever varying with each emotion. . . . Her mouth was a true Cupid's bow, her straight, delicately shaped nose of the most refined type, with arched nostrils, and her eyebrows, so delicately pencilled, and forehead were perfect."

In November 1851, Lady Bulwer Lytton

* The Chalons lived at 10, Wimpole Street at this date.

removed to what she called her "new den" near Fulham Road—Thurloe Cottage, Old Brompton, and her description of its situation in the next letter gives an interesting idea of the rural isolation that still surrounded what was then a suburb of London.

December 26, 1851.

DEAR SIR,—As I dined downstairs yesterday, and am not only alive to tell the story, but am a great deal better, I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you and your brother according to your kind promise on Saturday, though I begin to fear that such *really great* men, in *every* sense of the word, will hardly be able to get into my Lilliputian kennel, which is about big enough for Titania, Mistletoe, and Tiber, et voilà tout, and nevertheless is not yet half furnished, not being able to get my bookcases home, which are being made after an idea of my own, as indeed the whole nutshell is so arranged. Neither do I yet possess an *easy* chair or a sofa, for you know the Fairies all died before our time, leaving the Witch Poverty Regent of the World. Lest you should lose your way, and meet some Lancelot Gobbo to

send you "first to the right hand, then to the left, and then to no hand at all," I must tell you it is the *last* turn on your *left* hand *as you come from Town* before you get to Thurloe Square, exactly opposite Lord Talbot's place, Brompton Park,* which is written in large white letters on the Park Gates; so now hoping you will be able to find your way to me, believe me,

Ever your much obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

January 5, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—As you are not my Enemy (at least I hope not?) I cannot say "Oh! that you would write a book!" Mais certes si jamais il vous arrive de faire une pareille corvée you will know, even with half-a-dozen revises, how impossible it is to get a book printed correctly when it is printed in a hurry; it goes through so many hands, and as the Frenchman said of English pronunciation—"The English write Nebuchadnezzar and pronounce it Sardanapalus!!" So

* A little farther west was another country-like residence, Hereford House, Earl's Court, occupied by Lady Bulwer Lytton's friend, Lady Hotham, who was famous for the brilliant garden-parties she gave here and an excellent cook.

English printers seem to think it is with French, and though far from being an imaginative people, it is astonishing the sportive fancy they exercise with regard to *fancy* accents, for in printing French as long as the accent is *there*, they seem to think it is entirely a matter of *taste* over which letter it hovers! But look at the way the English is mutilated in my poor *Molière* and you will no longer be astonished at the Béchamèle of the French. . . . *

I am really astonished at the unbounded praise the Book has received (from all except the clique who have preserved a discreet silence up to the present moment), and I am really grateful for a magnificent leading article that appeared in *The Era* on the Preface alone, for they are not to review the book until next week. Verily, if ever one has a friend and a judicious champion, it is in a stranger. . . .

* Lady Bulwer Lytton always introduced a good deal of French into her books, and her letters generally contained some sentences in the same language. Thackeray noted this habit in his chapter on *Literary Snobs*:—"And what linguists many of our writers are! Lady Bulwer, Lady Londonderry, Sir Edward himself—they write the French language with a luxurious elegance and ease which sets them far above their Continental rivals, of whom not one (except Paul de Kock) knows a word of English."

Only fancy a German (none *but* a German could have perpetrated such a gaucherie) writing me a flummerising letter about my books; he offers me a bust of my Brute, wishing to know whether I would like it in bronze or in marble. Voici comme je lui ai accusée réception de sa lettre—"Vraiment, monsieur, Sir E. Bulwer Lytton s'est tant fait Statuetteisée Marbrisé et Bronserisé que par nouveauté, *moi* je lui prefererai *en terre!*"—this, at least selon moi, would be much more germane to the matter.

I am again laid up with one of my terrible colds, so my visits to Brighton and Yorkshire are adjourned *sine die*. . . .

Very truly yours,
ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

January 7, 1852.

Encore un beau talent! Why really, my dear sir, you are a terrible monopolist, and had *I* any influence in Parnassus I would have you indicted for Bigamy! You have made us long to hear you* as well as see you, and depend upon it we shall avail ourselves of the earliest opportunity of doing so: mais outre mon rhûme le nouvel au me

* Chalon played the clarinet well.

grippe toujours dans les tristes à pattes du desespoir—car les ennuyeux se suivent et pourtant ne se ressemblent pas. . . . Strange to say that Mr. Tiber, last evening, who had another Blenheim to drink *cream* with him, it being Twelfth Night, put his paw into the bag and drew out Miss Mistletoe! dont actuellement il a fait hommage à cette damzelle, and with Miss Ryves's and my united kind regards. . . .

Ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Lady Bulwer Lytton writes her next letter in Caninese.

THURLOE COTTAGE,

January 10, 1852.

Bootiful Miss Mistletoe! Belle dame blanche de mes pensées,

I'll wear your colours in my hat
(when I get one?)
Your picture in my heart,

where you have reigned since the first moment I beheld your starry eyes peeping out from those fleecy clouds of silken love locks which shade without veiling them. Neither will I boast among other puppies of the flattering confidence you

have placed in me by trusting me with your portrait, which nevertheless I must say is not *quite* as beautiful as if your Masters had done it, but your note as to caligraphy and composition is exquisite and quite equal to such *great* Masters as even *yours.*

My poor Mud is ill in bed, having ruptured a small blood-vessel in the throat from coughing, but begs her kind regards to your Masters and many kisses to your silken ears, and with my baise-pattes respectueuses, croyez moi, Belle Mistletoe,

Votre tout dévoué,

TIBER.

January 16, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—When your Paquet d'esprit arrived to-day I was in Park Lane with a friend who had carried me off *vi et armis* this fine day. . . . Your charming Mme. Bertini is like the sun and sees brilliancy where none exists but what is reflected from her own. My vanity would tempt me to keep her exquis petit billet, mais par surcroît de vanité je le renvoye, for like Horace's praise of Psaphon's Birds, the eulogist so far exceeds in merit the subject of her eulogy that it

cannot but make the latter feel too sensibly her inferiority. On the other hand, returning a chef-d'œuvre to A. E. Chalon is indeed, as we vulgarly say, sending coals to Newcastle. Shall we find you and your brother at home if we storm your castle at about one next Tuesday? Should Mme. Bertini be with you, it would indeed be an additional pleasure, for the Originale d'un esprit *si original* doit à la lettre être charmante and in perfect keeping with the inhabitants of No. 10, Wimpole Street.

Ever your sincerely obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

January 22, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—I must thank you for the charming *Matinée Musicale* you gave us yesterday and which we hope did not fatigue you. The liquid notes of your clarinet are still floating on my ear and memory; but as I before said, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for monopolising so many talents *en perfection*, and there really ought to be some law of nature to prevent persons like you (who with any *one* of your acquirements are rich enough to purchase a large niche in the Temple of Fame) from robbing tant de pauvres

ignorants qui courent le monde as you and your brother have done, though I am willing to admit that the great delight you both afford to the said worldly compris même les ignorants sont des circonstances extenuates.

What very nice people M. and Mme. Bertini seem; she sings with great taste, and both her and her husband's touch on the piano are exquisite.

Mr. Tiber desires mille choses aimables to Mesdames Tiney and Mistletoe. He has, I am sorry to say, got the cramp in his left paw, having gone out yesterday in pursuit of air and exercise under difficulties—to wit, fog and frost.

Your much obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Samedi, Ce Janvier 24, 1852.

Ah! si c'en est ainsi, mes chers Messieurs, je vous en félicite, car ne savez vous pas que les injures et l'injustice d'une Machine infernale aussi venale et aussi méprisable sur tous les rapports que la Presse contemporaine ; font l'engrais qui fume les lauriers semés pour la Postérité ; et le véritable génie n'arrive jamais *si sûrement* à son adresse dans le Temple de la Gloire, qui quand c'est bien et dûment plombé de pareils mensonges et

nigauderies; d'abord la camaraderie, c'est le fléau de ce pays et du siècle; toute est clique, soit en art, soit en littérature, soit en politique; et hors la clique—point de salut, c'est à dire pas de chance. Mais avec un beau talent comme le vôtre, Messieurs, vous pouvez bien vous en moquer de cette sacrée clique, pour laquelle rien n'est sacré, ayant trempé vos pinceaux dans les couleurs immortelles—certes, c'est l'immortalité que vous récompensera, et décidément la dite récompense sera une peu plus belle qu'un Puff de Journaliste!

Adieu, cher monsieur, rappelez moi au souvenir aimable de M. votre frère. Tiber ne veut plus que la trop aimable Mistletoe souffre de sa crampe à lui dans la patte gauche, car ça serait un mariage morganatique, et il n'est ni assez prince ni assez scélérat pour se permettre de pareilles lâchettes, mais tout bonnement l'ami fidèle de la belle Mistletoe et sa mère, comme moi j'aspire à être l'amie très sincère de leur Maîtres.

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

January 28, 1852.

Thank you sincerely, dear sir, for your kind note and kinder sympathy, and can only say that

abuse in such company is certainly far more honourable than *puffery* in that of the set that are puffed; "for is it not more glorious, oh! Cleomenes, to be defeated with the Athenians than to conquer with the Bœotians?" We are indeed y compris notre aristocratie de hier—a nation of shopkeepers, which accounts for our generally running *counter* to good taste in Art and Literature.

I send you a paper which was sent to me this morning. I am both grateful for and pleased at it, as, with the editor of *The Era*, this good writer, whoever he is, is the only one of the *tribe* who has had the justice, generosity, and *courage* to *defend me*, for even *The Observer* and *Dispatch* and *Weekly Times*, who seldom praise anything, over-praised the book, mais en revanche *over-abused me*. . . .

Your grateful and obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

THURLOE COTTAGE,

February 3, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am indeed truly sorry to hear of the cause of your leaving town, but hope you may both succeed in not only finding sleep

but happy dreams to boot. Were it true that dreams are the reflex of the imagination, who would be so justly entitled to beautiful dreams as you and your brother. . . . N'avez-vous pas honte?!—ou plutôt n'avais-je pas bien raison de dire qu'entre vous deux Messieurs—vous accaparez *tous* les talents; libre aux autres de s'y soumettre s'ils veulent; mais pour mon comfite l'idée me trotte de vous entamer un procés de n'avoir si indignement juive! I *ought* to be at Brighton with Lady Hotham, but I could not manage to get away, which I now doubly regret as you are there. If it were *only* the *Press* that abused me, I assure you it might do so till it was tired without extorting any notice from me; but I have at length been goaded into exposing *The Infernal Machine* that sets the Press on. I send you another newspaper, and I am happy to say several others have taken up the persecution against me in a generous spirit. M. and Mme. Bertini were good enough to call on Sunday, but I was so ill I regret to say I could not see them.

Miss Ryves unites with me in kind regards to yourself and your brother, and sincerely hoping that you may both return to Town with as great

a stock of *health* as you possess of *talents* (vous avouerez qu'il est impossible de pomper les bons voeux plus loin),

Believe me, dear sir,
Ever your sincerely obliged,
ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Voici un Mot délicieux de M. Dupin qu'on vient de me raconter, et comme vous en êtes digne, cher Monsieur, je vous le mande. Quand Louis Napoléon avait confisqué les Propriétes de la famille d'Orleans, "Ah!" s'ecria M. Dupin, "C'est le premier Vol de l'Aigle!" N'est ce pas charmant?

T.A.V. R. BULWER LYTTON.

10 heures, ce 5 Février, 1852. Ma deuxième lettre aujourd'hui.

February 7, 1852.

A thousand thanks, my dear sir, for your charming book of caricatures, at which we have been greatly amused and which I will return safely this evening. Your "Bird's-eye view of a Prima Donna" is excellent. I rather winced under my poor dear (and to the *last* beautiful)

*Catalani,** I was so fond of her and she was so kind to me at Florence. I now see why you wanted my *phiz*, and for *that* book you are quite welcome to it, mais il n'y a pas y qui tient (pas même un *Air Chalon*) qui peut d'une gênese faire un Greuze.

I congratulate you upon having such charming weather at Brighton, and I hope you will both derive a fresh stock of health from it; I think it must be that in this, as in all else, Apollo especially favours *you twain*, as we all know to our sorrow that the English sun, like the English people, seldom shines. How strange that you should have found a duplicate Mizzy. No doubt from having held her head *Sky* high at being *your* dog, maintenant elle ira *queue-bas* (oh ! ! !) d'avoir trouvée une rivale. . . .

In *whirlwind* haste,

Ever your sincerely obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

THURLOE COTTAGE,

February 10, 1852.

Thank you, dear sir, very much for correcting my ignorance. I was not aware that the

* Angelica Catalani, the singer. She appeared in London 1807–14, and again in 1822, and died in 1849.

feminine of gêne meant anything worse than what in this "Nation of Shopkeepers" is considered *the* very worst of crimes—to wit, the extreme verge of beggarhood or misère renfoncée: mais dorénavant grâce à vos bons conseils, cher monsieur, je m'en garderai bien de me fagoter de la sorte et me bornera—en fait de bévue-à la stricte vérité de Mme. de Talleyrand (*Grant*) qui annonçait à ses amis qu'elle était d'Inde—et il faut avouer que quand on est bien et honnêtement bête c'est une manière comme une autre de s'orienter.*

The book of books was safely returned. Why did you not *embellish* it with an effigy of old Valabrégue, who was one of Nature's caricatures? After having tormented her life out, he had the grace to be inconsolable at poor Catalani's death and to follow her a fortnight after—I suppose to torment her in the other world *en vrai mari.* I have not the least doubt, dear sir, that your genius could even make a lovely picture out of an old fright; and if the prediction of a racecourse sibyl that I was to be left a large fortune (!??) in March 1852, should come to pass, I would with

* Throughout this work Lady Bulwer Lytton's French, though often dubious, has been transcribed as she wrote it.

pleasure give you an opportunity of achieving the triumph of Art over Nature. As anything is better than the canting women of England, I envy you the cantering ladies you so wittily and graphically describe. . . .

Forgive this horrid scrawl, for although a quill has been scientifically described as being a thing plucked from the *pinions* of one goose to express the *opinions* of another goose, yet the one I'm writing with positively refuses the sympathy necessary to fulfil its mission, but on the contrary plays the critic and almost blots every word I write, so I will only add what nothing can efface, namely, that I am, dear sir,

Ever your sincerely obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

THURLOE COTTAGE,

February 13, 1852.

Mille remercîments, cher monsieur, de votre aimable billet. On a beaucoup parlé ici de ce malheur de porte cochère—et puis après comme à Brighton on a bien dansé! car tout ce qu'on ne remporte pas, par un coup de main dans ce monde; on renvoye avec un coup de pied. Je vous reconnais bien à votre critique, mais plus encore

à votre esprit. Vous avez raison touchant l'ordre chronologique du Brigandage de l'Aigle, mais pour celui de Louis Napoléon, c'était bien son coup d'essai, ou premier vol—mais puisque la fortune vient en volant, comme l'appétit en mangeant, sans doute il ne sera pas son dernier. À propos des Bandits, on parle d'envoyer mon animal de beau frère à Constantinople—tout ce que m'étonne moi c'est qu'on ne lui a pas mis à la Porte, dès ses escapades et gobemoucheries à Madrid.*

I had a little black Syrian Princess here yesterday flanked by the Persian Secretary of Legation, a very handsome man in a still more beautiful dress. They were in perfect ecstasies at *The Launch of the Homeward Bound*—as well they might be, for every day that I look at it some new beauty seems to start out—just as one looks at the sky of a summer's night till one seems to *look* more stars into it than there were at first.

Quant au Greuze!—what objection could I have

* Sir Henry Bulwer (Lord Dalling and Bulwer) was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary at Florence in 1852, and did not become Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte until 1858, so the report was premature.

to being immortalised by you except one, that of beggars having no right to pleasure or luxuries of any kind; and this year I have been so awfully swindled, in more ways than one, that it will take me three years hard work to make up for it, et quand ma bourse réprendra un peu d'embonpoint I assure you there are other pictures of yours that I would far rather possess than my own ugly old Phiz—which I think is a perfect desecration of such a *beau talent, as yours*, to let you waste your valuable time in doing, for old women should never be *canvassed* except at a contested election.

Tiber desires all sorts of tender messages to Mizzy—at least so I conclude by the accelerated wagging of his tail (car les chiens prendent le roman toujours par la queue). . . .

Ever your sincerely obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Ce 28 Février, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—A feverish cold which has confined me to my bed for the last week has prevented my sooner thanking you for your last note. . . . I sincerely hope that your brother will eventually derive benefit from chafings of the *amiable* personage you describe; no doubt the latter is a

Citizen of the World, and having married an English woman, upon the principle of doing at Rome as Rome does, thinks it necessary in order to keep pace with our National Customs to be as brutal a husband as possible; and giving them black eyes is with regard to their *wives* la seule manière que les Maris Anglais ont de leur donner dans l'œil! Quant à moi, j'ai une telle indigestion du bonheur conjugal que je ferais fort bien de mourir le plus tôt possible, car je me damne sur mes vieux jours en luttant contre mon mépris et lâche bourreau, ou que c'est anticiper l'Enfer de passer sa vie a déjouer les sourdes ménées d'une pareille misérable. . . .

Agréez l'assurance de mon amitié sincère,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

THURLOE COTTAGE,

March 6, 1852.

I am very happy, dear sir, to hear such good accounts of your brother's improvement, and despite the proverbial *ne sutor ultra crepidam* begin to have some faith in the cobbler, and hope that your brother will soon become a Peripatetic, for of all Schools of Philosophy it is the best, and

would be still better if at times it would enable one to walk away from oneself!

Mille remercîments du tas d'esprit de l'Elysée Bourbon, ils sont tous charmant, and I only wish we had some President here, or even some unprecedented personage, pour donner *le balai* to our Augean Stable of a Parliament, et un bon soufflet to our *Jew-dish-us* Chancellor of the Exchequer,* whose Brougham, the day after his advent, was seen for three hours at Rothschild's door—ainsi c'est clair qu'il commence par nous *Juiver*. Mrs. Dizzy *ex officio* must be killing, which she certainly never was before. In rummaging over some old papers to arrange them (car j'ai un pressentiment qu'enfin Dieu aura pitié de moi et me prendra bientôt), I found a copy of an old lady's will which I copied out some years ago at Venice. As I am quite of her way of thinking (barring "les amants," of which I have not had any experience, and therefore on that score alone have found them *wanting*!) I send it to you. . . .

Ever sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

* Disraeli had recently been appointed to this office in Lord Derby's first Ministry.

Lady Bulwer Lytton

Testament d'une Grande Dame qui mourut en 1775. Elle avait déposé cette piece chez un notaire trois ans avant sa mort.

Attendu que Mon Chien a été le plus fidèle de mes amis, je le fais mon exécuteur testamentaire et je lui confie la disposition de ma fortune. J'ai beaucoup à me plaindre des hommes ; ils ne valent rien, ni au moral, ni au physique. Mes amants étaient faibles et trompeurs, mes amis faux et perfides. De toutes les créatures qui m'entouraient, il n'y a que mon chien auquel j'ai reconnu quelques hommes qualités. Je veux donc que l'on dispose de mon bien en sa faveur et qu'on distribue des legs à ceux qui recevront ses caresses.

Mon testament serait calqué sur çelui çi.

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

April 21, 1852.

It was very kind of you, my dear sir, to take the trouble of bringing my cassolette on Sunday, and I much regret that being confined to my bed with a severe attack of bronchitis, I missed the pleasure of seeing you: but being up for the first time to-day I shall hope to be able *de me dédommager* by calling upon you some day next

week. I have had (so my doctor says) a very narrow escape of my life, only *living*, like all other bad habits, is one that old women cannot easily leave off; and so the stupid man has been dosing me with *anti*mony, when, from its being *chronic*, I am sure *money* would be much better for *my chest* complaint! The buds and leaves are actually beginning, like London Misses of eighteen, to *come out*, so I hope Mme. de Sévigné will be able to bring you a bouquet next week. . . .

I am sure every one will say that *the* picture is, yet *is not, a copy of my countenance.* However, selon votre ordinaire, you prove yourself a great artist by studying from the *Antique.* . . .

Your much obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

May 4, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—The Fates are, comme à l'ordinaire, conspiring against me in the shape of east winds, so that I know not when I shall be able to get out; and even Mme. de Sévigné, who has set Time at defiance, thanks to those inveterate English bunglers, is not yet in a proper *frame* of mind de se rendre chez vous.* Ainsi

* Lady Bulwer Lytton was presenting a picture of de Sévigné to Chalon.

je viens vous supplier de me dédommager de toutes ces contrariétés. In plain English, I am going to have a few friends and a little music on Friday evening, the 14th, and hope that you and your brother will kindly consent to join them; he shall have the easiest chair or sofa that my nut-shell affords, and you one or two very pretty faces to look at, so don't be afraid that it will be *all* in the *old woman line* like the Hostess. I must also most particularly request the pleasure of your clarinet's company, but recollect that there is this marked difference between you and it, *i.e.*, though I should not care to see *it* without you, I shall be always happy to see you even without it, though doubly happy to see you together—the harmony is so perfect, which convinces me that however fond you may be of that instrument, on which you so pre-eminently excel, you are nevertheless not *wedded* to it. . . .

Ever most sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

May 8, 1852.

I am really ashamed, my dear sir, to send you such a heavy piece of gilt gingerbread, so very different to the frame I designed; but English

people have neither taste nor intelligence, and so one only loses one's time and patience in trying to din it into them; so that I can only say that in begging your acceptance of this little enamel on copper of Mme. de Sévigné when she was a girl, the ugliness of the frame (so unworthy of it and of you) is not my fault, as it has been sent back to the maker six times; and so now en désespoir de cause, I have put my own taste out of the question and kept it, it being a little less Bartholomew Fairish than at first. . . .

I am very sorry to hear that you also have followed that detestable fashion of getting the Influenza, but hope sincerely that it will take its departure before the 14th, and that your clarinet will take a leaf out of your book and be très aimable on that evening. . . .

I have no doubt that *the* drawing looks very charming, for I never saw one of yours that did not; but for the sake of truth it should have figured in the Catalogue as "An imaginary retrospective sketch by A. E. Chalon."

Ever sincerely yours,

Rosina Bulwer Lytton.

Lady Bulwer Lytton

May 9, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—The piano shall be tuned to concert pitch: unfortunately it is not my own, for not being able to get a white and gold one to match my room I must have one made, Collard's being only white and maple and ugly shapes. Pray come as gothically early as you can on Friday—eight if you like—but do not order your Brougham till one. Many thanks for Mrs. Kerr's note, by which it would appear that already having "Condorcet on the Mind," we are now likely to have Comte D'Orsay on the *Tourneur*; as he is to be Chamberlain for a man who has spent his last shilling, it was a great thing to get hold of a Louis and a Napoléon, or one may say a double Napoléon. . . .*

Forgive this vulgar sheet of paper worthy of a Lady Mayoress or Mrs. Dizzy before her *Ben* became an Exchequer *Bill*. . . .

You need not take the trouble of sending your music-book stand, as I took care to order one, for

* Lady Bulwer Lytton's use of the word Tourneur—Turner—was intended as a pun on D'Orsay's appointment as Superintendent of the Beaux Arts by the budding Emperor of the French. But Louis Napoléon came too late to the aid of his old friend, for D'Orsay died in August 1852.

you could not suppose I would treat your music as badly as my other guests and give it no place of rest, which I fear will be the case with them, for really considering the Lilliputian dimensions of my rooms I should only have invited Cherubim—but considering that they are as difficult to be had as Angels, I have adopted the wise mezzo-termine of giving my poor Terrestrials your heavenly sounds. . . .

Ever your sincerely obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

July 8, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—You need not regret the absence of grand aires, pianos, guitars, or anything else: your own clarinet being a host in itself and you, *sans equivoque*, being a Host in yourself. I also congratulate you upon my loss, which is your gain, as fat people ought to be excluded by Act of Parliament from all réunions during the Dog Days. . . .

Ever sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

August 5, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—Even beyond your pencil and pallet (to say nothing of your clarinet) you must

be a necromancer by the manner in which you divine and supply people's wants and wishes. Yesterday Lady Hotham was just in the act of admiring your *cadeau*, it having just opened one of its beautiful dark blue eyes, when your note arrived. She enlightened my ignorance by exclaiming, "Oh! I declare it's a Commilina—a plant I've been long promised and have never yet got; is it not beautiful?" So you see how à propos your generosity was. . . . As for the Art Union, Miss Ryves and I will gratefully avail ourselves of your obliging recollection, but Lady Hotham* leaves Town for Lady de Trafford's (her sister's) some day this week. *We* had a great loss in your agreeable society at the Gardens,† but you had none save in the Ballet, which was exceedingly graceful, novel, and pretty. . . .

Ever, dear sir, your much obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

* She was Jane Seymour, daughter and co-heiress (with her sister Laura, Lady de Trafford) of Francis Colman of Hillersdon, Devon. Married (1) Roger Pettiward, and (2) Admiral Sir William Hotham, G.C.B.

† This was probably a Fête at the Horticultural Gardens, situated on the ground where the Imperial Institute and other buildings now stand.

THURLOE COTTAGE,

September 11, 1852.

Many thanks, dear sir, for your letter. . . . I am very glad to hear that your brother has already derived so much benefit from the wild waves and fresh sea breezes of Herne Bay. You would not have got quietly out of Town without an invasion from me, but that I have been three weeks confined to my bed with a nervous fever, which has been followed by an attack of erysipelas. All this has effectually put an end to my long owing visits into Derbyshire and Kent, for I am so weak that Heaven only knows when I shall be able to move. Tibby much envies Tiney and Mizzy, and says how much luckier dogs are that belong to a *great* man than to a big woman. . . .

As for *littleness* that is *meanness*, it is the idiosyncrasy of the present age. I don't think a *great* man could exist four and twenty hours in the present state of our social atmosphere. I can't even conceive what new quackery there can be "looming in the future" even for that great charlatan Disraeli to astonish our weak minds with at the Opening of Parliament; unless, indeed, he takes to dancing Shaftesbury's Charac-

teristics or singing Babbage's Calculating Machine to a Jew's-harp accompaniment. . . .

Ever sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

THURLOE COTTAGE,

September 25, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—I should instantly have complied with your request about the receipt for the Beignets, but when I got your letter Lady Hotham had just come up from Trafford in great grief about poor Lady de Trafford (her sister), who is not expected to live :* but when Lady H. sent me some game this morning the Bulletin was that Lady de Trafford was a little better, so I went down to Hereford House and got the receipt from Brandling, Lady Hotham putting (as you will perceive) her valuable autograph at the top to authenticate it, and adding, "Pray tell Mr. Chalon that as he likes my Beignets, I hope he will come and eat them very often." When you do, I'll take care that you have another *Plât doux* for which Brandling is famous, and which I think will quite eclipse the Beignets. By the bye, you will perceive that there is neither

* She died a month later.

apple, quince, peach, orange, nor *any other* fruit in the said Beignets, but that they are tout bonnement des *Pancakes Endimanchés.*

Only think of a madman of the name of Neild dying and leaving all his poor relations starving, while he bequeaths *one million* to notre petite, ladre, égoïste, imbécile de reine, qui sans doute n'aura pas la justice de le restituer à la famille de ce nigaud.* I suppose you heard what the old miser's tenants said when he was brought down into Berkshire to be buried? "Ah! poor old wretch, if he could a-knowed what an expense it would have been a-bringing his *empty bones* down here, he'd have come down hisself and *a-bursted* here to save the money." I think his worthy successor, the Queen, might have paid for the Duke of Wellington's funeral out of this pretty little windfall, without dragging it out of the Public. My dear sir, they did give the poor old Duke of Wellington an emetic, but he having the chronic habit of not *rejecting anything* he was offered, it took no effect; his good fortune

* It was half a million that John Camden Neild, of Chelsea, bequeathed to Victoria. She gave the executors £1000 each, secured an annuity to an old servant of the testator's, erected a memorial window to Neild, and kept the vast residue of the fortune for herself.

followed him to the grave, for he suffered little or nothing, and he died as a great captain ought, by going off like a shot. . . .

I have finished "Napoléon Le Petit." It is written with all the *vivida vis anima* with which Victor Hugo must write, but where I think he is wrong is in saddling Louis Napoléon with all the butcheries of the Coup d'Etat; for he surely must be aware that gunpowder entrusted à discretion to a lawless soldiery is like the infernal wine in a German tale and incites to all sorts of atrocities; the head and front of Louis Napoléon's offending is his ambition—cela posé, I do not see that he is to blame for a single thing he has done: he betrayed and conspired against no kind and confiding relation to swindle him out of his Kingdom and his Crown, as Louis Philippe did. The French Empire was in want of a Groom of the Chambers, and he as a Royalty out of place applied for the situation and got it; and what Victor Hugo seems so very irate at is, that not only is "a footman kept," but a score and all *en bas de soie*—by which he seems to think Louis Napoléon has put his foot in it as well as the lackeys. As for the confiscation of the Orléans property, *that* is only the regular routine of

usurpation, and independent of the many grudges he owed Louis Philippe, it was only self-defence to remove so great a lever of power from the Orléans family that might be turned against him any day. For that amiable and excellent family I am truly sorry—but then we are told that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children. Quant à Louis Napoléon, he has now the finest game in his hands that ever man played if he will but play it: qui sait? Rochefoucauld likens our actions to bouts rimés which every one makes correspond with what they please; the fact is they are more like mathematical problems, the motive of which is the *base*, and the world seldom or ever being able to discover this base, the actions themselves, in every part of their superstructure, to it appear dubious or untrue.

And so the Cocoanut is flourishing—as you truly say—"*like all other Humbugs.*" The Scriptures say in allusion to this peculiar branch of human industry (to wit, humbug): "I saw the wicked flourishing like a green bay-tree," but the worldly version of this passage should be: "I saw the Humbug flourishing like Mr. Chalon's sham cocoanut-tree—pompously great without, but all hollow within." But what think you of my having

a *real* oasis in the Desert? All my *laburnums* and roses in full bloom for the second time: seeing is believing, so I send you a few leaves —and take it as a good omen that I shall yet flourish even though I have "fallen into the sere and yellow leaf."

I have written you such a volume that I have scarcely time to add that Miss Ryves unites with me in kind regards to yourself and your brother; and Tibby, who is in a state of beatitude at one side of the rug, and Djalma, my black cat, in a state of be*cat*itude at the other, me prient de presenter mille pattes de velours à Mesdames Mizzy et Tiney, and believe me ever, dear sir,

Sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

THURLOE COTTAGE,

October 15, 1852.

At length I can acknowledge the roses with a thousand thanks—but before it was impossible, not being able to imagine from whence they came: and yet I might have guessed; vû que vous, Monsieur, comme Chantilly embellisez les roses, for it is only Chalon's roses that could be so lovely at such a season of fog and frost. They

arrived quite fresh and blooming, and in the *right*, not wrong, box, at about half-past seven, when we were at dinner, and it being the birthday of a very pretty little girl, who with her mother is staying with me, I thought the address was a mistake and they were for her. . . .

I don't know whether your "We" is merely regal parlance: if so, agréez mes hommages: but if it means you and your brother I shall be doubly glad to see you on Saturday: if, on the other hand, it means you, Mizzy, and Tiney, and the new *Dodge* (not of Venice but of Herne Bay), Tibby begs me to assure you that you shall have anything but a *dogged* reception, though you will have a very stupid one, as we shall be quite alone. I still being full of pains and aches but ever

Sincerely yours,
ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

THURLOE COTTAGE,
November 26, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—With respect to the Cotoneaster, it may be treated like a wife, c'est à dire as ill as possible without the slightest attention, save by throwing a little cold water on it when-

ever it attempts to put forth anything new. Like me it is accustomed to rough it, but unlike me is extremely hardy: in other words, it is of the tough Mountaineer genus, and will bear being in the open air in all weathers, very frosty nights perhaps excepted; it is more rare than pretty, having a largeish yellow flower. Before I go, which will, D.V., be the first week in December, I hope to take you a plant better worth your acceptance.

The best thing I have heard about *Uncle Tom's Cabin* * is the following: "'Ma; isn't Uncle Tom the husband of Anti-Slavery?"

Ever your sincerely obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

During 1853 Lady Bulwer Lytton's correspondence with A. E. Chalon lapsed, but it was renewed in the following year and became even more frequent than before. The interval of silence is explained to some extent in the following letter:

* First published this year, 1852.

PHILLIPS'S HOTEL,
LLANGOLLEN,
NORTH WALES,
January 21, 1854.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—No doubt you and Mizzy will both be surprised at again seeing the print of my paw, which you would have seen long before this but for two reasons: first, when I wrote to you from Brighton last winter you never answered my letter, and I took your silence as a *hint* that you were tired of my griffonnage, and so though you are not *yet*, thank Heaven, "where the weary are at rest," *I* (for you know they say man and wife are *one!* ? ? ?) as one of the *wicked* ceased from troubling you. Then, after I returned from Paris with Lady Hotham, having been cheated out of (for *me*) a large sum of money, necessity forced me into a voluntary exile,* and I chose this secluded village but lovely country—with views worthy of even your and your brother's Pencil, and where I shall hope to entice you both down to pay me a visit for three or four weeks next

* Lady Bulwer Lytton lost money heavily by the failure of her publisher, Shoberl, just as her account became due.

summer, if I am still alive? After I came here, I had illness after illness, winding up with the scarlatina. . . . About four months ago the Chevalier de Birard and Lady Hotham wrote me word that they had been to see you at Kensington, and that you had been good enough to ask kindly after me. I then wrote to *both* for your *exact* address, for though "A. E. Chalon, Europe," would in all probability have found you,* yet in these days of juvenile delinquency and universal cigar smoking c'est trop risquer sa correspondence de la laisser errer dans le vague, and it was only last week, when I was confined to my bed with bronchitis, that I received your address. . . . I do hope you will both come and pay me and the *other* mountains a visit this summer. I assure you I will treat you very hospitably in "mine inn," where I hope you will both "take your ease" as well as me. . . . I grieve to say this is a good and aristocratic neighbourhood, for I had hoped to be quiet here in my insignificance and obscurity —but no!—and so I am ruined in post horses —and such post horses and crazy old vehicles.

* Chalon was now living at El Retiro, Campden Hill, Kensington.

My pleasantest and kindest neighbours are the Myddleton Biddulphs of Chirk Castle. She is a very nice little person—ditto Col. Biddulph, though I don't think he is as good-looking as his brother, who is about the Queen. Chirk Castle,* as of course you know, is one of the finest old feudal places in the kingdom. You can see seventeen counties from the battlements, and Pugin has restored the house with excellent taste. I never saw such magnificent timber in any park—some of the oaks being from a thousand to twelve hundred years old. When we are able to go over and stay, Tib and I are to have the State bed that poor Charles the First slept in, and then instead of a Blenheim I suppose Master Tib will fancy himself a King Charles dog!

We were all snowed up here a fortnight ago —men, carriages, and horses daily lost in the snow, and no post for four days, the river frozen over—but the roaring, rushing, brawling Dee is once more free and bounding along at railway speed, so that like Baron Munchausen's dog it runs a great risk—not indeed of running its legs, but of running its waves off! . . .

* It is now, 1914, occupied by Lord Howard de Walden.

I have not even got my beautiful "Homeward Bound" here to console me; but as Heaven only knows when (if ever again?) I shall be homeward bound, perhaps it is as well. Of course you know Wilson's beautiful landscape of Llangollen Bridge? But I could show you fifty more beautiful views and more worthy of your pencil; but if you are good enough to come, as I hope you *will*, pray don't forget your clarinet, which I long to hear again.

Hoping that m'en donnerez de vos nouvelles au plus tôt,

Believe me ever, dear Mr. Chalon,
Sincerely yours,
ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

PHILLIPS'S HOTEL,
LLANGOLLEN,
January 26, 1854.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I thank you *sur le champ* for your letter, finding that when I don't do so my correspondence accumulates so awfully that I run the risk of dying and making "no sign." I can in no way account for the loss of my Brighton letter to you, unless by supposing that it was engulfed in that bourne from which *such* travellers some-

times *never* return, *i.e.* a servant's pocket. I am very glad to hear that your brother is so well, and though you give me no hope of seeing you both this summer, I am so accustomed to hope against hope, that I will *still* hope that you may change your mind and come. I think I know your Bel Retiro: is it not an old James the First—red brick with stone copings—Palazzo, very large, within walls, on the left-hand side as you *go* to the Palace *from* London? I am glad both your chef-d'œuvres are more worthily lodged, for a right royal genius should be regally domiciled. . . . Heaven only knows if we shall ever meet again on this side the grave.

Passo di pene in pene
Questa seccede a quella;
Ma l'ultima chi viene
E sempre la peggior.

Such is my lot. . . . Believe me, dear Mr. Chalon, yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

March 21, 1854.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—You are very good to preserve those old roots—one would almost suppose that you were as fond of *weeds* as I

am. But you say nothing of the dear cocoanut tree—that Jewel of the Philippine Isles of your garden; and yet from the name I have the misfortune to groan under, you might have supposed that I should feel an *especial* interest in anything of the Humbug genus, whether vegetable, zoophyte, or zoological. A strange subject, that tableau you are doing: if anyone could make it interesting you can, still I should think even *you* would find what you artists call the ordonnance of the picture difficult, with that Paterfamilias and his continuations all in deep mourning. . . . Alas! yes, I shall again be dragged before "The British Public" at the end of this week. My publisher has orders to send you an early copy—mais çela n'engage à rien, you are not obliged to read it; it will do for the waste-paper basket, or, better still, would make an admirable *fond* for infant cocoanuts with a little external green paint and varnish, while the reviews of it would do for the *milk*—not exactly of human *kindness*—but of human jobbing.

Forgive this dull scrawl, but I am in bed with a severe attack of bronchitis, so believe me, dear Mr. Chalon, ever sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

March 25, 1854.

I do indeed wish, dear Mr. Chalon, that I *could* see your (I'm very sure charming) picture of what the Yankees would call "The Father of a Family and Juvenile Fixings"—but what is the use of wishing for anything in this world? Nevertheless, I also wish I *had* the pretty string of pink hearts that you mention, for I have had such a string of *black* hearts to contend against that my own is well nigh broken. The poor cocoanut! I am sorry for him, but he cannot be a genuine humbug, or, as you say, it would flourish in any soil, so perhaps it may turn out to be a real one after all!

I am afraid you will be greatly disappointed with my book,* for in truth it seems to me a sad hash, as I had originally intended affecting editorship and calling it "Lay Sermons" by Alciphron, but was bullied out of this and the anonymous by my publisher; so then I rechristened it, as you see, and as it is an intensely political novel, perhaps the present *is* a better title, only I wanted to mystify the Philistines at first. I warn you that the first vol. is very stupid—to make the whole affair less so, I send you a key to it.

* *Behind the Scenes*, 1854.

This new book, *Behind the Scenes*, was, of course, a thinly-veiled attack upon Bulwer Lytton and his friends; and the author in this case, as ever, believed that adverse reviews of her work emanated from "The Press Gang" of "Sir Liar" —as she always styled her husband. She expresses these views fully in the next letter to Chalon:

PHILLIPS'S HOTEL, LLANGOLLEN,
Easter Monday, 1854.

Had you been (which Heaven forbid!) as long pounded in the mortar *du plus fort* with the unscrupulous pestle of paid-for abuse as I have, you would understand how callous I feel both to public abuse and public praise, being well aware that the former is a matter of private malice and personal pique, and the latter, nine times out of ten, a matter of chance; but really that disgusting Press Gang has achieved the miracle of making even *me* (!) pity their pet ruffian, Sir Liar, who may well exclaim "Save me from my friends!" For it is quite impossible to write a novel without a bad character in it, and it is equally impossible to find *any* evil, from the most embryo vice to the

most fully consummate crime, that would not be applicable to *that personage*; but it is not only cruel but absurd of his dear clique to write under every villain I draw—"That is Sir E. Bulwer Lytton" (as Sir William Curtis used to write under his own portrait in the Exhibition—"*This is I*"!!); and when they have thus fitted the cap of every vice upon him, stick him in the market-place for all the little boys to point at: but if his *dear friends will* go on assuming that he and every villainy are synonymous (which far be it from me to deny) the cruelty is in *them* and not the scandal in me; and when my Life is published and bare unvarnished *facts* stated—authenticated by the wretched animal's own letters—the world will then see what faint shadowy creations such water—or rather milk and water—colour sketches the Ponsonby Ferrars tribe are. As for the abuse in *The Athenæum*, it is so grossly personal, so ill-temperedly and vexed-schoolboyishly false in every line, and the *conscience stricken* old score—of the machinations exercised to prevent my books being published by the magnates of the trade and fairly dealt with after—is so dragged *à propos de bottes* into court (since I make not the slightest allusion to this well-authenticated *fact* in my

present book) that any one may *swear* to the *writer* of *that* attack, coupled with the steam-engine power exerted to assure the "pensive" or *pence*-give "public" that the book is so dreadfully dull, so vulgar, and the characters so unnaturally drawn!! though the head and front of my offending and the first count in the indictment is their being such startling likenesses. You are quite right in saying that I have *flattered* Dizzy—in truth I have flattered them *all*, and Ponsonby Ferrars* more than any of them: but *you*, who are so much in the habit of doing likewise, ought to know that portraits *must* be flattered—car ma foi! la nature est bien loin d'être aussi belle—but though you flattered till the flattery reached the moon, it could never come up to the vanity of the originals.

I don't know if you ever read a clever—but disgustingly coarse, not to say gross—book (more especially for a *Miss* to write) called *Jane Eyre*? An offensively vulgar and equally coarse book called *Shirley*? And a revoltingly blasphemous book called *Wuthering Heights*?—all of which the Press Gang—who lapidate me—be-praised and be-puffed up to the skies. Then to be sure

* Intended for Bulwer Lytton: the character of "Edith" for herself.

these Bells—as they call themselves, but Miss Brontës, adulate and bow down and worship *men in general* in all their books, like genuine "British Females" as they are, and court and toady—Mr. Thackeray in particular—so no wonder they have been puffed to the skies; and what would be coarse and *trop libre* in a man's writing in them is extolled à l'outrance and called "a masculine understanding," which is the critical conventional term for *lauding* a woman; whereas when they want to sneer down the same, or it may be a higher, calibre of intellect in another woman, they have only to turn the phrase upside down and brand her as "a strong-minded woman." But commend me to the giant strides cant has made in this *most* canting country under the sun, for in the last century there was a novelist, a certain Mrs. Charlotte Smith, who only laboured under an incipient attack of ordinary jog-trot-bad husband, and yet *she* vigorously threw out the *complaint* by serving him up—or out?—in every novel she wrote—hot, cold, *roasted*, and *devilled*, and yet she was not reviled and lapidated: on the contrary, she was voted extremely clever and very much to be pitied! Then, to be sure, poor Mr. Smith, good

easy man, not only bore it all, but frankly owned that he deserved it, and did not set the blood-hounds after her because, under the torture, his victim had uttered a cry that reached the public ear.

"I suppose it is because my doctor said I must not even look at a pen and ink for at least three weeks to come that I have bored you with this long egotistical rigmarole; the reason of his prohibition was that I am spitting blood and have a cough that would kill a horse, so I hope it will do me the comparatively trifling service of killing an ass, and then *The Assinæum* can come out strong in an obituary panegyric à sa manière. I assure you I had no qualms in killing poor Edith: I only did as I would be done by. Your story of the Queen of *Squash* would do for a pendant to one I was ear witness to. My mother had a maid who was a lump of affectation and a perfect Mrs. Malaprop, so that my poor sister and I delighted in drawing her out. One night she had been to Drury Lane; the next morning we said: "Well, Gifford, how were you amused?" "Oh! I was much *hedified*, miss, it was a *Istorical* Play, *Junius Wezer*!" . .

Very truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

P.S.—I had hoped and expected that your great common sense and very good eyesight would have caused you to receive the glowing description of my *own youthful loveliness ! ! ! cum grano salis*, as it was only done as a set off to Sir Liar's extatic *importements* in describing *his* personal attractions in one of his published self-adulations, where he says :

"He" (meaning himself) "was a gifted *boy* ! ! with golden hair
And eyes of Heaven's" (query the other place) "own blue:
While her" (meaning me) "*maturer* charms but shone
With a *faint* lustre borrowed from his own ! ! "

(So you see I have not come up to him yet!)

Lady Bulwer Lytton was here, apparently, incorrectly quoting some lines from a poem entitled *Lady Cheveley or the Woman of Honour*, which was written in retort to her first book, *Cheveley; or the Man of Honour*, 1839:—

"But he of whom we sing was tall and fair,
With a proud brow, and the rich golden hair,

. . . .

And he had large and melancholy eyes,
That seemed to win their azure from the skies.

. . . .

A gifted boy, earth echoed with his fame,
And sages knew and reverenced his name.

. . . .

He yet with boyhood's generous impulse warm,
She rich in womanhood's well-ripened charm.

. . . .

He, her young lover, before whom she shone
With the reflected lustre of his own."

Bulwer Lytton denied the authorship of the poem, and no doubt it was written either by his mother or his brother, Henry Bulwer, more probably the latter, as the Preface was dated from Paris.

March 28, 1854.

Mille et mille remercîments de votre belle et magnifique fleur, cher Monsieur Chalon, elle est vraiment jolie—comme un cœur!

I should have warned you that the first volume of *Behind the Scenes* is very stupid, but like the dinners at Buckingham Palace (at least as Lord Melbourne said of them) it's "meant to be so"! As usual, what a disgraceful hash they have made of the French, and that very good story which I got from Mr. Jerningham of "Mes très chers frères—et vous autres canaille chrétiens" they have quite spoilt with their "canaille de (!) chrétiens"; nor does the English

always escape unscathed with their crufles for truffles, and even Lord Jeffrey's name they have spelt wrong—but such printing is one among the many "miseries of authors."

Forgive this scrawl, but I am in bed with a bad attack of bronchitis.

Ever your much obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

However, *Behind the Scenes* did receive some favourable reviews, for Lady Bulwer Lytton writes to Chalon soon after :

April 22, 1854.

Many thanks for your kind attention in sending me that extract from *The Observer*. I was astonished at *The Globe* and *The Standard* letting me off so well, especially the latter, which tells the world a piece of news which both it and I certainly ignored till then—*i.e.*, that I have "such a reputation for talent that no praise can add to it and no blame scarcely diminish from it." . . . I have just got a letter telling me that the Queen and Prince Albert have been reading *Behind the Scenes* and by no means think me such a monster! I wonder how her Majesty would

like such a husband as Sir Liar! Quant aux *Gardes Suisses*—I cry Peccavi! All you say is true, and I merely instanced them apropos of foreign aid, which was to be had for hire; and perhaps my dislike of the sordid and canting Genevons—whom I suffered under for five years—made me thoughtlessly unjust to the Swiss—a noble-hearted, brave people, whom as a nation I adore. Qui sait? Perhaps your great-great-great-grandsire and mine were friends; for I have (or rather *had*, for alas! it has gone the way of all gold with *me*) a gold snuff-box, with a portrait (in relief) of King William—and some of his followers—which his Majesty gave to a silly old Lord Massy (the progenitor of a long line of undegenerated boobies) for having fished him out of the Boyne and entertained him afterwards.

Troubling myself so very little as I do about that English Council of Ten—the Press, I was not aware that you and your brother had ever been pressed; but did your genius (which happily it does *not*) want any additional zeal that would stamp it for posterity, I only know that the world at large—by which I don't mean that concrete ass, the British Public, but Europe, Asia, *Africa* (yes), and America—have

done you justice; so courage, Messieurs, even though Mesdames Gamp and Grundy should be "dispoged" to mob you over their cups of gin —or tea.

You are quite right; in this nation not only of shopkeepers, but of Hucksters and Peddlers, Traders *are*, out and out, the most liberal patrons of Art. Two years ago, when all my pecuniary miseries came upon me, through the fraud of a *soi-disant* stockbroker (who afterwards turned out to be an emissary of the Arch Fiend's), and I was obliged to sell everything that was sellable—except, as I hope I need not tell you, *The Homeward Bound*,* for which I was offered a large sum—I had a very small picture for which a *friend* (!) kindly offered me £40—but for which a Publisher (not mine but one I never saw) gave me £195.

Alas! my dear Mr. Chalon, as I expect and hope to die here, I have little chance of ever seeing your magnificent collection again, more especially as you have got such a darling wise canine Groom of the Chambers who mouths out all *Beggars* by the skirts. Tib and I both send

* The picture of Chalon's, presented by the artist to Lady Bulwer Lytton some years before.

him our admiration and our kisses, avec mille baise-pattes à Mme. Mizzy et sa chère petite mère, and with kind regards to your brother,

Believe me, dear Mr. Chalon,
Ever sincerely yours,
Rosina Bulwer Lytton,
Moglie di Diavolo.

Hitherto Lady Bulwer Lytton's letters have, in the main, made pleasant reading, for even painful troubles and ill-health have been lightened by a whimsical touch. But in the summer of 1854—harried by financial worries, for her allowance of £400 a year was always being mortgaged to meet old debts—her nature hardened, and her wrongs and hatred of Bulwer Lytton completely obsessed her mind and, in result, her correspondence. To Chalon, as to other friends, she wrote voluminous letters of twenty pages and more narrating her grievances, real and imaginary, and compact of uncontrolled, indiscriminate abuse. As there was of necessity much repetition, it will suffice to give but a few examples of this most painful phase of Lady Bulwer Lytton's painful life.

LLANGOLLEN WORKHOUSE OR UNION
(at least the result of *my* union),
June 10, 1854.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—The reason I did not thank you for your last kind note was that it found me ill in bed, so ill that I hoped I was at length *en route* for the other world. I am sorry to bore you, and I don't want in any way to compromise you (or "*get you into a mess*" as the English elegantly express it), for on returning the accompanying letters and papers you need not make a single comment, if you will only kindly take the trouble of reading them, as I have *now* resolved upon making the *truth* known everywhere, not from the chimerical idea of exciting what don't exist in English people—*i.e.*, sympathy, justice, or feeling, but because I can stand the ceaseless infamy I am subjected to no longer, and therefore I *will* make it known. You may even show the enclosed hurried outline (which is soiled from all the hands it has passed through) to Mme. Bertini. In this outrageous infamy of Sir Liar sending one of his mistresses about the world to gull the public as a virtuous widow!! and the other still blacker iniquity of setting up

her equally vicious sister, Miss Caroline Deacon, in a school at Kensington, who had also been his mistress, the real motive is *this*, not only to get them cheaply off his hands but to set them about the world *puffing* him and calumniating his poor victim wife; and then when such calumnies get about comes the mystifying—and at the same time apparently substantiating—cant of "Oh! I did not hear of it from Sir Edward, or any one of his set, or any one *he* could possibly know; I heard it from a widow, who was on a visit at such a place, or from Mrs. So and So, who has a daughter at school at Kensington, or from a clergyman" etc. Now I do hope that if you hear of any gulls about to send their poor unfortunate children into the pollution of Miss Caroline Deacon's "establishment" (??) at Kensington, you will prevent their falling into the trap. Another of that monster's infamies—as you will perceive by those letters I send you—is to pass himself off as the "Guardian"!! of his own and Colonel King's natural children by this wretch, Miss Laura Deacon alias Mrs. Beaumont—the wretch for whom I and my poor children were turned out of house and home, and have been hunted through the world; but were I to write

an encyclopedia I could not tell you all or half that Fiend's villainy or the dirty work he and *The Guilt** have done about my last book. One reporter was turned away for writing a scurrilous review of it contrary to the positive orders of the editor, but he had been bought over by *The Guilt*; as it appears there is a low pot-house in the Strand called "The Cheshire Cheese" (not quite the cheese either) where all the reporters and myrmidons of *The Guilt* meet once a week, the said *Guilt* finding the supper and gin *ad libitum*; and when these fellows get occasionally kicked out of their employment by doing the dirty work of *The Guilt* either against artists or authors, medical men, lawyers, actors, n'importe qui?—*The Guilt* pays and maintains them till they can get fresh employment.† It appears that a fortnight ago forty of these wretches sat in council "*to decide upon the best plan of effectually crushing me*," and after *The Forty Thieves* had sat four hours upon this momentous subject, they could only resolve upon no better plan than con-

* An allusion to The Guild of Literature and Art, founded by Bulwer Lytton in 1851.

† It is scarcely necessary to observe that this was a perverted version of the short-lived Guild's aims and work.

tinuing the conspiracy of giving out right and left that I was *mad!* It was a spy in the camp who informed me of all this, for there is no end of the *treachery* and villainy of all the filth connected with the English press. But no wonder English Society should be the leprous Hypocrisy, the plague spot of cant that it is when we have such a little mass of selfishness and idiocy for a Queen. . . .

If possible, let Mrs. Braine have that skeleton outline of my persecution by the end of the week: any one may guess what the filling up of such an outline has been, so that you cannot wonder at my being always ill; but you may wonder why I should bore you with my grievances? Because, dear Mr. Chalon, I take the liberty of calling you my friend, and therefore as a matter of *course* victimise you like all my other friends—mais je vous jure que cela ne tire pas à conséquence. As you have found me out, I may as well "own the soft impeachment" about *The Bromelia.* The fact is the *man* tempted me, and I did write!—that is he gave me £30 for that tale, which I wrote in three days, and I thought £10 a day very good wages for an *out pauper.*

Yours sincerely,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Preparatory to a statement in the next letter it must be borne in mind that the circumstances attending the death of Emily Lytton were very sad. The mother learned through Miss Planché that her daughter, whom she had not seen for ten years, was lying dangerously ill in a small lodging-house at Pelham Terrace, Brompton. Lady Bulwer Lytton proceeded to the house, and Miss Planché thus describes how the mother and daughter met for the last time: "The pitiful sight of this young girl, without a relative near her, lying in a room which was almost entirely taken up by the bedstead, was so startling that she remained for a time speechless, as, almost transfixed, she gazed on the loved form from which she had been so long separated—lying insensible, her features changed by fever, and hardly to be recognised in the darkened room, where only the sheen from her golden hair as it reflected the light of the single candle guided the eye to the pillow and the sufferer." According to this narrative, the doctors, by Bulwer Lytton's orders, insisted that the patient's life was en-

dangered by the excitement and knowledge of her mother's presence, which could hardly be the case when Miss Lytton was in a state of delirium and unconsciousness alternately. Miss Planché continues: "Dr. Rouse followed me upstairs immediately, and then Lady Lytton threw herself on her knees to him, and implored him to let her stay to the end. I had in a life, then quite young, seen many stage representations of mental agony, but here was the *real anguish*, and every phase of it is burnt into my memory. . . . I pointed out to the poor mother the risk she ran of misrepresentation that she had caused the death of her daughter through excitement, and further attempted to show that she would gain nothing by remaining . . . I prevailed . . . God alone knows the agony of that mother's heart as she walked quietly past the closed door of the room where her poor dying girl was so soon to breathe her last." Emily Lytton died the following evening, April 29, 1848, and the newspapers announced that the event took place "At Knebworth." But Miss Planché inserted a

correction: "On Saturday, April 29, at a lodging in Brompton, of typhoid fever, Emily Elizabeth, the only daughter of Sir Edward and Lady Bulwer Lytton, aged twenty." For this, Miss Planché adds, "Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton sent my father a challenge. . . . (no duel took place) Seldom has it been the fate of any one to be so maligned and crushed as this woman; it was even said of Lady Lytton that she did not love her children—this I most emphatically deny. I have good reason to know how she loved her daughter, and as to her son, she scarcely ever spoke of him to me without tears, in the early days of our acquaintance."

June 15, 1854.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I was quite prepared for your being scandalised—like all "gentlemen of England who live at home at ease"—at my horrible language! But as I not only always have my poor murdered dying child before me, and withal in the midst of great physical suffering have to work hard for my daily bread—but also on the other hand, in my miserable trade of author,

like to suit my *words* to the actions they endeavour to represent—*I feel* that for the infamy I have undergone and the persecution I am *still* undergoing, were a quintessential, concrete vituperation to be extracted and condensed from all the known languages living and dead, it would fall far short of conveying any adequate notion of the Fiendish Villainy to which I have been subjected. As for the iced cucumber cant of Society—more especially English Society—I despise it so cordially that, as a *choice*, I would rather outrage than conciliate it. No doubt were Shakespeare living now, and silly enough to commit his play of *King Lear* to the criticism of his friends (or Society!) *they* would be scandalised at the heart-wrung expressions he puts into poor old Lear's mouth about his "Pelican Daughters," and would strongly advise his substituting the mild and gentlemanlike terms of "those young ladies," or at most "those misguided and ill-advised young women"!!! As for poor Lord Byron, I venerate his honest memory for his detestation of the beastly canting English and his telling them so in suitable language. No, what English Society requires and bows down to and worships is a loathsome, leprous, incarnate Infamy like Sir Liar Coward

Bulwer Lytton—a Profligate who has left *no* vice *unexhausted* and a Hypocrite who has left no virtue unassumed. Would that Dean Swift were now living—*he* would be the only man who could command *suitable language* to describe the wallowing infamy of that man, more especially that for which the Comtesse Marie de Warenzoff told me he was drummed out of Nice, and which Lady Pembroke had told her. When one neither hopes nor expects sympathy—nor even human feeling from any one—so neither does one ask or expect advice. As for Sir Francis Doyle,* with all his cold-blooded imbecility, he was by *no means* such a fool with regard to his *own* daughter's interests. I am sorry to have bored you with my "grievances" (!) as you call them, but I only did so *en route* to tell them, as I now do, to every wind that blows, which will perhaps satisfactorily account for the late Hurricanes!

I trouble you with another history of the infamy of *The Guilt*—having blotted out the writer's name. She alludes at the beginning to a warning I had received from another person (a man of course) not to accept any offers of service

* Lady Bulwer Lytton's cousin, and trustee in her matrimonial separation business.

from her or anybody else, for the moment any one does such a strange and unique thing as to try and serve me, of course I am immediately warned against them by those who go upon the quiet and gentlemanlike plan of letting my enemies have full and unmolested scope for their iniquity. . . .

I am grieved to hear that you also have sorrows—I did not know that men ever had any, especially men of your genius and rénommé.

With kind regards to your brother,

Believe me, yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Poor Chalon had to bear many repetitions of his correspondent's "grievances"; but after a time Lady Bulwer Lytton's innate humour peeps out again amid the welter of abuse, and her acid comments and reminiscences concerning her enemies often possess interest for those acquainted with the literary and social life of the time.

LLANGOLLEN,

August 20, 1854.

I am exceedingly sorry, dear Mr. Chalon, to hear of your severe attack, which seems to have been

so bad that if the doctors say it is *not* Cholera, I suppose it must have been something worse —to wit, the *Husband* of Cholera. I hope you will be careful, and not commit any imprudence in the way of greengages—or what to me is a far greater temptation, green *melons*.

Poor Lord Jocelyn!* his death was awfully sudden, but no doubt sa veuve "inconsolable" se remariera au plus tôt. One morning last week, when I opened my eyes, I saw a tall figure in deep mourning standing by my bedside! It was old Lady Castle-Stuart,† Lord C. having had the goodness at length to go the *last* stage to the D——l. I made her take off her cap of liberty, mantelet, etc., that I might *roll in the Weeds*—in the hope of catching it; but alas! as *yet*, not a single pin feather of the wings of freedom has appeared, let alone the invaluable *percussion* cap!

I am delighted to hear that you mean to embellish the great French Exposition of '55. Do you also mean to go over for it yourselves? If so, and you have no favourite locanda, I wish you would patronise my friend M. Michel and

* Son and heir of the third Earl of Roden.

† Jemima, daughter of Col. Robinson, R.A. Married, 1806, the second Earl Castle Stewart. She died 1859.

his most admirably appointed Hôtel de Paris, Rue de Richelieu; and if you mentioned my name to him, I am sure he would use you doubly well. I now feel more lonely than ever in this place,* a dear friend, who has been staying with me for the last month, having just left me. We did Conway, Chester, and the Menai Bridge while she was with me. I think Conway Castle without exception the most unique, stupendous, and beautiful ruin I ever saw. My friend was in raptures at the Menai Straits—but I, of course, thought them a joke to *my many straits* without any bridge to carry me over. Chester is more like a Continental town—that one would see in Burgundy or La Vendée—and it is out and out the nicest old *cinque cento* looking town that I have seen in England.

You must know that my reputation for miracles has quite eclipsed that of Prince Hohenlohe!—

* It is curious that Lady Bulwer Lytton makes no allusion to the visit of George Borrow, with his wife and his step-daughter, to quiet Llangollen in August 1854. One would imagine Lady Bulwer Lytton and Borrow had much in common, for both assumed an attitude of defence—or rather offence—against the world; both despised "the contemptible trade of author," which they pursued; both were wanderers and yet recluses; and both combined a bitter tongue with a kind heart.

at least in this village, where typhus was raging about three weeks ago; and a very pretty little milliner girl of about 16 having been given over by the doctors of "this ilk" I took her in hand, and gave her a dessert-spoonful of fresh *yeast*. An hour after she had taken it, the delirium left her. I repeated the dose every four hours; towards evening she grew hungry, having tasted nothing for three weeks, and asked for something to eat. She is now getting rapidly better, and I give her meat and claret every day. The parish doctors were so astounded at what they considered a perfect miracle, and so grateful for the secret, that they awarded me a vote of thanks! Would that they would evince their gratitude by dispatching Sir Liar for me, which from what I have seen of their practice they seem quite competent to do. However, I am endeavouring to learn *patience*—and perseverance from a "stout gentleman" at the back of this house who is always in pursuit of healthful exercise and domiciliary gymnastics under difficulties, which he achieves by walking for hours (literally) round an enormous cabbage which is planted in the midst of his Garden of Eden, which in itself is about the size of an ordinary

pocket-handkerchief; the whole performance concludes by his vaulting (as high I suppose as his own ambition) to clutch a clothes 'line,' from which are appended, fluttering in the breeze, sundry pairs of certain masculine under-garments which give the scenic effect of a grand tableau of a monster and phantom gibbet! After which, upon again reaching *terra firma*, he bestows upon himself a most unmerciful castigation with both hands, comme çela se pratique parmi Messieurs les cochers de fiacres in frosty weather, when apparently well pleased with his successful labours in his vocation he retires into the house. . . .

Ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

LLANGOLLEN,

September 8, 1854.

You are very naughty, dear Mr. Chalon, to show my scribbledoms to any one (more especially such a distinguished authoress as Mrs. Ward) since they are always written in Electric Telegraph haste—they ought to be lettres de *caché* (not cachet!) for all save the persons to whom they are addressed. Two things prevented my answering your last letter: first, I thought you

were at Margate adding to your caricature book, and next, like the farmers, I have had such a plentiful harvest—but mine has been of worries—that I have literally not known which way to turn. However, yesterday evening I turned down to my favourite ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey and, thanks to Tib's geological researches, I found a small black curiously embossed crucifix, which turns out to be silver, the *ci-devant* property, I suppose, of one of the poor monks. Lord Dungannon and the rest of the archæologians would give their ears for it—but their ears would not tempt me.

I am exceedingly cross just now, having had the virtue to resist an invitation to the camp at Boulogne, and so virtue being its own reward (and verily having no other!) I am taking it out in a fit of the sulks. Nevertheless, I have had the most joyous and genuine laugh I have had since the year before the Flood, when I was 15. Doubtless you have "heard tell" of those two misguided and romantic (?) old ladies, Lady Eleanor Butler* and Miss Ponsonby, who eloped (!) about the year 1782 from Ireland, Miss Ponsonby dressed as a groom in top boots and buckskin

* Daughter of the sixteenth Earl of Ormonde.

unmentionables, Lady E. as a peasant girl or some such *miséréré.* Well, they came and settled down here at Plâs Newydd, and in 1787 Lady Eleanor kept a journal, which I have been reading. It is written with a crow quill in a very fine Italian hand and *looks* like poetry—but *is* the very prosiest of prose. Their *menus du dîner* are minutely given, and as the dinners certainly were not such as Vatel would have achieved, they (the old ladies) appear to have been martyrs to indigestion, the attacks of which seem to have been as regular and relentless as the visits of the tax-gatherer, n' ayant rien de caché pour les amis. They also give *minute* descriptions of the emetics which they were in the habit of taking, but these latter, like a fashionable husband, did not remain with them long, and they, like ditto wives, appear to have been considerably relieved by getting rid of them. Then follows an entry somewhat compromising to two *soi-disant* vestals: "November 2. Must turn off John Thomas, for he has no idea of raking (!) and never seems to improve." The next has at this distance of time a sort of historical interest, as the "third boy, Arthur," was the late Duke of Wellington. Here is the passage. "November 3. A very kind letter this morning from

Lady Mornington, who tells me her third boy, Arthur, has just been appointed aide-de-camp to Lord Buckinghamshire."

The perusal of this priceless document I owe to a great ally of mine, the Old Parish Clerk, who was a protégé of the old ladies, but being now superannuated and consequently superseded since he has been on *half*-piety, he does gentleman in a pew behind mine at church. He is a great character in his way, and before or after the service generally favours me with either a political, historical, or *mythological* discussion, and sometimes with all three. Last Sunday he observed, after taking Bomarsund over again, "Why that 'ere Emperor of Roosia ain't no better than Alexander the Great, for if you remember, he got to fancy his-self a demi-god, and insisted upon the people calling him Jupiter Ammon!" "Yes," said I, "only the Emperor of Russia goes a step further and fancies himself Jupiter Tonans!"

What a long rigmarole I have written you, and yet I cannot end it without breaking a lance for *the* most *bootiful* eyes in the world—my Tiber's. You talk of *your* dog's eyes being like topazes! I tell you Tibbie's are like two great suns in the

dark under the sofa, and black as midnight in the light. . . .

Ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

September 16, 1854.

Hélas! cette pauvre mère, mais les mères ne sont elles pas créeés pour souffrir? du moins je le dirais moi d'assurées mon experience personelle: quant à la pauvre dame "soignant son malheur," comme vous dites, cher M. Chalon, why it is the *nature* of all great sorrows to be hugged, just as my poor innocent Tibbie, when I go out and leave him (which is seldom and only *en cas de visite*, when being only a poor little Parish dog he *won't* behave himself in a carriage), he consoles himself by making himself as miserable as possible and lying on the door-mat licking the paws of his heart till I return. There is *no* balm for that moral elephantiasis, a *great* grief—no, not even the hackneyed assurance that "the darkest hour is just before the dawn," for it has been the *darkest hour* with me *all* my life, and I have seen *no* dawn yet, so must only console myself with La Fontaine's assertion, "C'est être innocent que d'être malheureux": only unfortunately there is

a sort of St. Bartholomew *en permanence* for all the Innocents of this world; and my *fête*, or rather *fate*, being a continual 24th of August, I have almost arrived at the same conclusion as a cook I had when I was first executed (vulgo, married), a Frenchman, who used to say: "Oui, oui, sans doute il y'a une Providence, mais diantre! elle est souvent en voyage!"

I envy you seeing those graceful Spanish dancers. Apropos of the graceful reminds one of the disgraceful, and I see by yesterday's *Times* that Mrs. Fitzwilliam, of the Haymarket Theatre, is dead, poor wretched woman, after a very short illness; so I suppose it is Buckstone's Mrs. Fitzwilliam, as I do not know of any other? À quoi pensez vous donc I edit the old *Lady's Journal?* Don't you know the fate of everything I publish? And as you are fresh from *She Stoops to Conquer*, forgive me if I quote Tony Lumpkin and say "I should not so much mind *your* disappointment, but I should greatly care for my own!" And I have been jolted about quite enough already upon the Crackskull Common (and *very common* it is) of that infamous Press Gang without giving them the Nuts of editing poor Lady Eleanor's *Goose*

Green, unless indeed I could be *sure* of finding three jolly Pigeons in the shape of Publisher, Printer, and Reviewers.

I am very glad you got well without going to Margate, as I don't fancy you would have liked it, as the *natives* not being edible like those of Colchester, you might have found them difficult to swallow. Vous dites à propos de ma trouvaille que j'étais née coiffée—si c'en est ainsi décidément c'est du *malheur*, car moi je dis, that I cannot even take a walk without meeting with a *cross* of some sort or other. . . . Forgive this atrocious scrawl, but I am a goose that has been so well plucked that I have not a single quill left.

Yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

September 28, 1854.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—You are cruel to threaten me with not writing, as were it not for hearing from my friends—between you and I and the *Post*—I should forget that I was in the land of the living, where I would far rather *not* be had I a choice, which I never have, beyond that of the renowned Mr. Hobson. Poor Mrs. W., I sincerely feel for her, or any one who has a living

or dead sorrow—but worse, *far worse*, the former. However, having drained every human torture to the dregs, I have naturally become an epicure in misery, and can with truth say that the *ne plus ultra of all* is having the Mizantine punishment of a living body tied to a dead one carried on to the very soul; and while fettered yet forsaken, riveted to a man who has left no vice unexhausted or no virtue unassumed, or who, more properly speaking, has worn every *known* sin threadbare, and invented many others not yet patent in the infernal regions. Forgive this stupid letter, but I am suffering from intermitting fever and unremitting villainy. Remember to-morrow is *my jour de fête* or Goose Day,* so I hope you will celebrate it appropriately.

Truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

LLANGOLLEN,

October 7, 1854.

Thank you very much, dear Mr. Chalon, for letting me see the enclosed letters which I return,

* Apparently Lady Bulwer Lytton alludes to the anniversary of her wedding, which took place on August 29, 1827. If so, she wrote *September* 28, at the head of the letter, in mistake for August.

because I think they ought to remain among your family archives as authenticating a miracle! *i.e.*, that there has been ONE Dutchman born into the world—and that in the Nineteenth Century too—poetically minded! It is written, as the Turks say, that you are destined to raise expectations in old ladies which are not to be realised, for here come I, following in the steps of Mrs. Wood, owning "the soft impeachment" that I *had* hoped you would have sent me a pen and ink *croquis* of that good lady, but no, you wisely fly temptation (?) and won't go near her! I am not surprised at you having "resisted the Queen," as I think her by no means irresistible. So it seems we have been reckoning our victories before they are achieved, and that as Sebastopol has yet to be taken we were only mistaken. The sole good that I can see as likely to accrue from this horrid war is that the *frayering* (!) with the French may humanise (if anything *can* do so) the English in their feelings (if they have any?), manners, and cuisine. . . . Here is something *really* new about Russia that I am *sure* you have not yet heard nor the Duke of Newcastle either! One of my poor old protégées, who lives in the mountains and who, like all old women of course, is often

"terrible bad with the *rheumatics*," to say nothing of the *room attic* she lives in, when I went to see her yesterday began by offering me the following fitting consolations for *my* miserable lot by telling me to think of the wretched state the "poor little Queen must be in with that good-for-nothing Emperor of Rooshee" ready from one moment to another to come over and "*cut off her head*, and make mincemeat agin Christmas of Prince Albert and all the *rile* children." "But, dear heart, it won't bear a thought, and what a dreadful thing for trade if this here war continues, for it's from Rooshee that all them there Dutch Cheeses comes, isn't it, my lady, and them *Rooshee ducks* as the men wears?" . . .

Ever sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Faugh!

PHILLIPS'S HOTEL,
LLANGOLLEN,
October 18, 1854.

Alas! dear Mr. Chalon, there *is* no divesting oneself of selfishness! therefore I confess that I sincerely regret that you refused Mrs. Wood's soirée, as notwithstanding the phrenological on-

slaught, certes il n'y avait pas de quoi en perdre la tête, thereforé I wish you had risked yours, "for that night only." The *tour* à l'Impératrice Romaine est un veritable tour de force. Cependant même avec son tour, la pauvre dame n'est pas si belle (Cybéle!). Well might the Roman Poets call such curious superstructures "building a head." I am delighted that you were not disappointed in the marvellous appearance de la dite dame;* that *chin-trap* she always wore, only to the best of my recollection it used to be alternately of black lace or very stiffly starched white cambric. As for the powder, there is no *vanity* in her wearing it—vû que lieu sûr elle ne l'a pas inventée! I wonder how she liked the new granddaughter the papers gave her the other day, for I saw in a meeting at Macclesfield, reported in *The Times*, where Lord and Lady Harrington were, "Lord and Lady Petersham" put down—poor little Petersham being just nine years old! du sorte qu'il n'a pas perdu son temps!

* The mother of Elizabeth Lady Harrington. She was Ann Rose, daughter of Cossley Hall, of Hyde Hall, Jamaica, and wife of William Green of Jamaica. As Lady Bulwer Lytton always refers to her as "Mrs. Wood," she no doubt married a second time, though this fact is not mentioned in *Burke*.

I am rejoiced to hear that you are painting a tableau du genre, though it is so long since I read any of Fielding's coarse, clever, and very graphic novels que *je n'y suis pas* as to the scene and chapter you mention. I only hope you won't bastardise Sophia Western's Muff by a *race croisée* with Mrs. Wood's *tour*, which naturally runs *in* your head as it runs round hers. As for the chapter entitled "A Crust for the Critics," if ever I write another chapter it shall be "A Cudgel for the Critics," the most concrete Rascals extant, always with the exception of their pet Ruffian, Sir Mountebank Liar Coward Bulwer Lytton.

How cruel of you to talk to me of what you never shewed me—viz., a portrait of Mme. de Genlis. Not that I am any admirer of that saint in print and sinner in action, but I should much like to have seen ces deux petites faussettes à chaque côté de son nez, which she herself admired so much.

Oh! this horrid war! to me the most touching incidents in it are the poor young Russian officer found dead on the battle-field with his hands clasped in prayer, and the other poor Russian with his poor innocent darlingissimo of a dog

sitting between his feet whom no entreaties could lure away from his dead master. Ah! had I your *beau talent*, this poor dog should not go long unimmortalised. Apropos of horrors, how could you ask if I was getting *on* with Welsh!!!!! Do you think I want to break every tooth in my head, or to be eternally gargling my throat with German gutturals and High Dutch splutterings, the whole miraculously blent with an oleaginous Irish brogue, rendered piquante by a dash of Scotch twang? At Babel they had the confusion of tongues, but Welsh, being a mosaic of *all*, may truly be called the *confounded* tongue.

As you will see by the date of this, I have got back to my winter quarters at the Hotel. Still, a village inn is but a sorry substitute for House and Home. However, God's Will be done, and the sooner it is His Will to let me go to my narrow last home the better pleased I shall be. . . .

Ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

October 23, 1854.

Au Gens du Village, Trompette du Bois and the wooden flourish of the réveil of the Matinée

in Wimpole Street (or Harley Street, which?) that you have just sounded in my ears, dear Mr. Chalon, rejoices me marvellously, and I only long for it to "come off." . . .

Were I a *capitol* Goose I should return you my grateful thanks for having eaten a *capital* goose in my honour on Michaelmas Day—but as it is, de grâce! never again drink my *health*, because health entails life, of which I am heartily sick: drink my *wealth* if you will, for verily *poverty* is the most leprous leprosy that I know of; and though we are told that the poor inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, we are so long kept out of our inheritance by this Chancery Suit of terrestrial existence—and by such élites du Diable as Sir Liar, who are so very long in going to another and a *hotter* world—that as far as *this* one is concerned I would rather attempt the tour de force of attempting to get the camel through the eye of a needle, for all the needles put together do not present such a head as that said poverty. Qui empêche toujours les bons esprits de parvenir, ainsi vivent les riches parvenus, say I.

That poor young Cockerel—his death is indeed truly melancholy, and I feel for his poor mother as one well bruised heart alone knows how to feel

for another. The God alone who sends such bitter trials can bear us up under them.

Yes, *I* was much touched too with that poor dear innocent old French general qui même aux prises avec les Russes ne pouvait se passer de sa tabatière. What a charming tableau *you* might make of this ready-made subject for next year's Exhibition. I should indeed much like to see your friend Mr. Munroe's splendid Gallery—but do not see the least chance of my ever getting out of this place—except to the Diet of Worms (oh!) . . .

Ever yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Another year!

January 2, 1855.

I should be very glad to hear, dear Mr. Chalon, that you *were* basking in the bright sun and looking at the blue Mediterranean, as I am sure it would do you more good than anything: *ne cede malis* is an excellent motto for a *man*, none better, as all men have their locomotive powers at least under their own control, not so we poor chartered slaves; and as for *me* individually, *my* only *chance*, as indeed it is my only wish, is that I

may soon see (or rather that it may soon see me) the *Subterranean.* Poor young Ryves's heritage, like all else in this best of all possible worlds, came too late, as he is going fast on a galloping consumption in the Pyrenees to what the Germans call God's Acre, and we English our last home, which to some of us is also the *first home* we ever knew.

Fie donc! Mizzy, to increase the canine population, when the poor dogs in the Crimea are dying by hundreds of starvation and the Russian dogs of grief on their dead masters' bodies. . . .

Adieu, dear Mr. Chalon, and wishing you many happy and happier New Years,

Believe me, ever sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

LLANGOLLEN CEMETERY.

Here I *lies* in dust,
Because I *must.*

February 10 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—According to the very *Irish* postal arrangements of this Ilk, your kind letter of the 6th. I only received this morning, which is so far lucky, that having had a relapse I have been so exceedingly ill that I could not

have thanked you for it before. . . . The *Tiber*, I am happy to tell you, has not débordé since; but has kept its *bed*, as you know it generally does in a hard frost. I think the lines to D'Orsay's Grandmother charming—at least your version, for those headed "original" I take to *be* yours; they are graceful, charming, and exquisitely turned, but the others, though *the raw material*, as the Yankees would say, that is the idea, is pretty, in the execution they are un peu tirés par les cheveux. You happy man, so you are busy preparing contributions to the Paris Exhibition! I don't know which is the most to be envied—you or *it*, but I suppose on the utilitarian principle of "the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers"—L'Exposition l'emporte.

What a pity when My Lord Derby the other night talked of Sir Liar's brilliant talents shedding lustre on the Cabinet—on the principle, I suppose, that the blacker Day and Martin is, the greater the lustre that it sheds—but what a pity I say that My Lord Derby did not specify *which* of those brilliant talents he more particularly admired . . .* Really, "for the sake of public

* There follows the catalogue of Bulwer Lytton's offences in more violent terms even than before.

morals," as that immured mosaic of every vice, Sir Liar himself, would say in one of his clap-trap speeches, you should have been more explicit! Truly England is a moral country! Very!! Only Heaven defend me from the blasphemous *cant* which does duty for morality both in Church and State; though it must be confessed that the members of the former, for the most part, like the Bishop of London, have at least a *saving* grace, for a more grasping, sordid, Mammon-worshipping set never existed—perfect *chevaux de frise* of *Sectarianism* without one spike of *Christianity*. All this is public and *un*-confidential, though forgive me for boring you with it: but you know there is a certain odious subject which always runs away with me, and no other censure (though it be legion) of its detestable object satisfies me, for like Queen Constance I feel that "lacking *my* wrong, no other tongue hath power to curse him *right!*"

To-day is the anniversary of our little selfish Queen's wedding. How I wish Prince Albert would celebrate it by biting her very untempting cheek till the blood streamed down her (as that *ornament* to the English Cabinet, Sir Liar, used to do mine), giving her a vigorous kicking into

the bargain; sending her children off to Germany or elsewhere away from her; . . . and *above all* stealing every guinea of her money which *she so doats upon*; and then perhaps she might have a little *human* feeling for other women, which now she has not, as lately for *appearance* sake to her vicious, hypocritical Court, she insisted upon the poor Duchess of Wellington continuing to live with *her* disgusting brute of a legal tyrant.*

There has been great squabbling at Chester between the Dean and Chapter and a Mr. McConkey. I send you six lines of local wit on the occasion:

> Uplifting his heels, in a fit of the spleen,
> McConkey kicks out at the Chapter and Dean;
> Sees a daw in each Canon, a nest in each stall—
> A plague on this cawing—out, out with them all!
> True, a stall is less fit for a daw than a donkey,
> So turn out the Canons and turn in McConkey.

I have no other news except that "Jenny Jones" this morning very sensibly differed from St. Paul and thought it better to *burn* than marry, and so *was* burnt accordingly in the inn-yard—but alas! it was only an old omnibus of that name that used to run to the station!

* An allusion to the second Duke.

I saw that "Life of Lady Blessington"* advertised and could not help thinking of the *Mot* of Mme. de Stal (not de Staël Holstein—though it would have held equally good in *her* case), who, when she had furnished an author with materials for writing her Memoirs and was asked by a friend how on earth she would manage to veil certain of her numerous and not very creditable adventures, replied: "Oh! ma chère, je me ferais faire qu'en Buste!" But even *en buste* Lady Blessington would gain little, as she was one of the blackest hearted women I ever heard of, as indeed the Orgies of Gore House Inquisition but too fully proved.

Adieu, dear Mr. Chalon, and with a thousand doggeries and darlingries from Tibby to Mizzy,

Croyez moi votre bien dévouée,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Par mi disgrazzia!

LLANGOLLEN CEMETERY.

February 17, 1855.

I am indeed glad, dear Mr. Chalon, that your poor brother's and your own *chef-d'œuvres* will

* *Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington*, by R. R. Madden, 1855.

have so good an arena wherein to be done justice to, and should rejoice still more had I any chance of seeing them there. Poor Barry! I have often grieved over his fate,* but in the modern world of art and literature destinies are divided into *puffs* and *blows*, et si tu as pot de terre, tant pis pour toi. Pray assure pretty little Mme. Bertini that she gives me credit for talents I do not possess; like the Farrier who set up for a doctor and had but *one* specific for every complaint, so I never tell anything but the simple truth; but Truth, like a Roman two-edged sword, has this great advantage, that it is the very *best* thing one can say of those who deserve praise, and the very *worst* thing that can be told of others, et comme votre jolie et spirituelle correspondente est dans la première catigorie il faut bien en prendre son parti.

Vos enfants gatés
En veulent-ils de cette pâtée?

But I must tell you that a gamekeeper of my father's once told me that dogs' food should be

* A reference, presumably, to James Barry (1741–1806), R.A., the Irish artist, who was deprived of his office of Professor of Painting in 1799, owing to allegations he had made against members of the Academy.

always given to them *dry*, as soups and liquids spoilt their teeth; and two physicians and a dog doctor told me that bones, though good for *large* dogs, were destruction to little dogs, more especially *small* chicken and pigeon bones, which they cannot *digest*, and therefore have the effect of pins and needles, causing them the most excruciating pains and shiverings, and also to die prematurely. And I have invariably found that when I do not watch Tib's dinner, and the servants by way of being very kind let him have chicken bones, he has one of these ague shivering fits half the night, with such a piteous expression of pain in hims poor big bootiful eyes that it is quite heartrending to see him.

Having done with the dogs, now for the ladies.

Yes, it is very amusing to watch even the posthumous humbug that goes on to patch up Lady Blessington's reputation, who, setting poor D'Orsay aside (who *had* a heart and therefore was worthy of a better fate), every one knows, when her first Cavaliero, Captain Jenkins, voudrais s'en defaire, actually put her up to auction, *en costume de Paradis* (! !), on the public mess table, and after this creditable fashion she ran the gauntlet of the whole regiment—before that

ass, Lord Blessington, married her. Then, to be sure, after all this, she always wrote ultra *moral sentiments* upon female propriety, and got that English Infernal Machine—the Press—always to travesty their type, and make black white to puff her. I'll tell you another speech which that prize Ox of Periodicals, Mrs. S. C. Hall, made to me about her at the *Prosery* as I and the *Rosery** as they called it, and truly it bears the *Hall* mark, though far from being pure gold! You must know I had upheld and defended that unfortunate L. E. L. against all the world, and firmly at that time believing in her innocence made my house her home, which she repaid by intriguing with my infamous husband;† and at

* Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Carter Hall lived at The Rosery, Brompton, for many years.

† Twenty years earlier Miss Landon's affairs were much discussed. Her contemporaries regarded her poetry as equal to Byron's, and her private life was curious. Although a young woman, she lived in Hans Place apart from her family. Scandal coupled her name with two prominent journalists, William Maginn and William Jerdan (who had known her from her childhood). These rumours caused the rupture of her engagement with John Forster. That L. E. L. intrigued with Bulwer Lytton is open to doubt, and rests on the statement of Lady Bulwer Lytton alone. He was a very great friend of Miss Landon, and gave her away when she was married to Mr. Maclean in 1838; and after her mysterious death four months

a later period doing dirty work for him against me. But at the time her marriage was broken off with that brute Forster of *The Examiner*— on account of Dr. Maginn having shown some most horrible and disgusting letters of hers— it appeared that loathsome satyr, old Jerdan, in one of his drunken fits at some dinner let out all *his liaison* with Miss Landon and gave her name coupled with some disgusting toast; this Sir Liar told me. Whereupon I was so indignant, and still so staunch to Miss Landon, that I went to her and said, "Your only way to clear yourself in the eyes of the world is for ever to shut your doors against this infamous man and on *no* pretext of literary or any *other business* ever admit him." She affected to be furious, made a great scene, and swore by all the Gods of Olympus (the only ones in which she believed) that Jerdan should never again darken her doors. I said she could not do less; therefore imagine my consternation and

later, at Cape Coast Castle, Bulwer Lytton contributed to the support of her mother, Mrs. Landon, annually until she died in 1854. This fact may have rankled in Lady Bulwer Lytton's mind, in view of her own financial difficulties, and caused her to give a perverted account of Miss Landon's relations with her husband.

disgust when a fortnight after, going to call upon her in Hans Place, the servant threw open the door too suddenly to announce me—and what should I see! but Miss Landon seated on old Jerdan's knee, with her arm round his neck! Sick at heart, I darted back into the carriage. She rushed out after me saying, "Mais, ma belle Rose, only hear me!" But I would *hear* nothing, as I had *seen* too much, and I always believe my eyes, though I don't *always* believe my ears, or at least what my ears hear. I was lamenting to the red-round-in-roses * the severe blow it had been to me to be so painfully convinced of this girl's utter worthlessness, and here is her *creditable* reply, with a laugh: "Oh!—I don't *chuse* to believe anything against Miss Landon —that is, it's like Lady Blessington—it don't suit me to do so." † And such was the *highly moral* and intellectual atmosphere (according to the Press!) which my young years were doomed to wither in, and by whose baneful influence my whole life has been blighted.

Your story about the conflagration at The

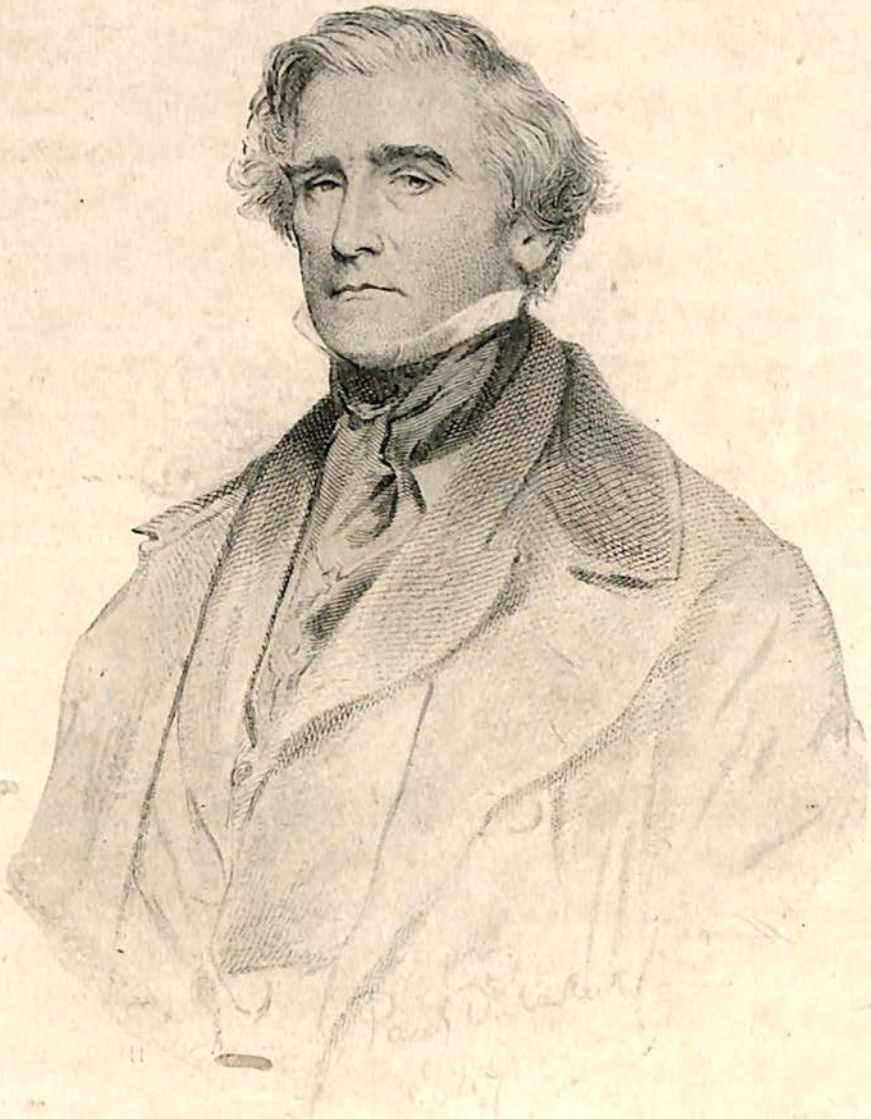
* Her nickname for Mrs. S. C. Hall.

† Both ladies were editors of Annuals to which Mrs. Hall contributed.

Prosery (which I had never heard before) made me laugh out loud. I am glad the Insurance were not to be *done* by the *Assurance* of Pecksniff,* and that instead of its being "The light of the Harem, the *young Nourmahal*," it turned out to be only the light of the scare'em, by that old noodle Hall! That man, were he not so disgusting an escroc, would be too ridiculous. At the time I knew them, Mrs. Pecksniff ("Maria, my love!") used to produce a book and a baby every nine months, both of which were invariably buried the following week—the former in oblivion, the latter in a *garden* that Pecksniff then possessed filled with little homœopathic tombstones labelling these lucky little abortions. One cold day in March, he kept me in an east wind beginning an elaborate explanation of the idea (??) he meant to work out in collecting his *annuals* there, but I cut him short by saying "Yes, yes, I perceive, Mr. Hall, the fact is you have converted this into a *nursery* garden!" On another occasion he had the luminous *idea* of having the red-round-of-beef† sit for her por-

* S. C. Hall is supposed to have been the original of Pecksniff as far as appearance and unctuous way of speaking are concerned, but not, of course, in character.

† Mrs. Hall.



SAMUEL CARTER HALL

trait as Sterne's Maria! I suggested to him that in the event of her becoming a *widow* it might be very appropriate to have her represented as mourning over her dead *ass*, but that *en attendant* that event, the public might not see the point of it. I can well understand all the artists rushing like hungry *lions* from The Prosery and taking refuge in bread and cheese, upon the same principle, no doubt, of the late King of Prussia who, when Napoléon, after his divorce from Joséphine, took him and two or three more crowned heads to pay her a visit at Malmaison, and left them for four hours sitting in the carriage in a cold north wind. Le Roi de Prusse—comme Napoléon n'avait jamais travaillé pour *lui*, n'avait pas décidé d'attendre pour Napoléon—enfin ouvra la portière, et sautant par la voiture disait à ses confrères: "Ma foi! puisque on nous traite en laquais, amusons nous comme tels! Je vais chercher du pain et du fromage moi, car je meure de faim!"—as I have no doubt the sovereigns of art did at The Prosery.

Do you not admire the nun-like portrait (Mother Abbess perhaps?) of Lady Blessington?

The portrait of D'Orsay is exceedingly like, particularly the *psychological* part I mean—his

waistcoat! The lithograph of Lady Blessington's tomb—Lord save us!—is very like a dish of *Purée de pommes de terre à la comtesse*, and therefore exceedingly appropriate. But having been christened Margaret tout honnement by the priest, I never could understand why she took French leave and called herself *Marguerite*. I quite agree with you that D'Orsay was the greatest humbug in *art* and Lady B. the greatest and most successful in Europe. I think Dr. Madden's climacteric doubt—as to whether the making a butt of one's friends is *quite* consistent with the laws of hospitality—is charming! le cher homme oublie que le Bon Dieu n'a point du rôle dans le drame de ces gens là, et quand c'en est ainsi, on donne toujours "Les Pilules du Diable." I was invaded yesterday by a legion of British Females staying at Chirk Castle. I said "You find me labouring under an attack of nausea over Lady Blessington's *Life*." "Oh!" said they, simultaneously bridling with a regular *British Female* Virtue-steeped-in-Vinegar look, "*I* should never dream of even *reading* anything about such a woman as Lady Blessington!" Chorus echo—"Nor I! nor I! nor I! nor I!"

You mistake, dear Mr. Chalon, about *my*

always recurring to my *idée fixe*. God knows I should be only too glad to forget it; but it is the *infamy* which is always *recurring* to *me* and keeping alive the irritation. The last insult the wretches have hit upon is certainly a most pitiful and impotent one—still it *is* an insult and an irritation; every other day I receive, directed in the spy Barnes's hand (whom I understand is an actress at the St. James's Theatre under the name of Miss Bulwer, to which she is no doubt *naturally* entitled), an *old* copy of *The Times* very dirty—as dirty as the creatures who send it: au reste je sais bien ne c'est inutile, archi-inutile de regimbér contre les aiguillons, cependant on passe sa vie en regimbant contre et on regimbera toujours tant que les blesseurs nous irritent.

I hope you have read that pretty exposé of My Lord C.'s honourable doings? Oh! yes! "they are *all* honourable men"—till they are found out. It was in parts so like that mosaic of every vice varnished with every hypocrisy, Sir Liar, that I fancied I was reading an episode of *his* infamous career, especially where the horrible scene of trying to cajole the dying man into leaving his property to My Lord C.'s bastard was on the trial varnished into the virtuous endeavour of

reconciling him with his family! *This*, and the placing spies round the poor victim and the perjury of his being in Russia when he was at Portumna Castle with his paramour, is *quite* worthy of Sir Liar; and the horrible account of the way in which that unnatural and infamous Mrs. Handcock starved and ill-used her poor murdered daughters is nearly a *facsimile* of the woman Beaumont's menage and her treatment of her children by Sir Liar and Colonel King, to whom that Admirable Crichton, Sir Liar, now does duty as their "Guardian" (!), selected by poor dear Mr. Beaumont on his death-bed!!—the said Mr. Beaumont being the male specimen of *Mrs. Harris*, inasmuch as that no such person ever existed.* But I must leave all this wickedness to tell you something very innocent and darling. You must know that when I was well there were six pigeons I used to feed every morning at the drawing-room window, among which was one white one that the others used to bully. Well, when I had been in bed about three weeks, one day the door from the sitting-room opening

* It is interesting to note that "Mrs. Harris" had become a colloquial classic allusion only ten years after the publication of *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

into my room was left open, and who should fly in but the poor darling white pigeon, who first lit upon my bed, and then flew into my bosom making a great cooing, to tell me he was glad he had found me, and since then he comes regularly every morning and seems to enjoy being King of the Castle and breakfasting in state without the others amazingly, and it is very pretty to see Tib giving him a slap with his paw if he thinks he is getting more than his share, and then the pigeon pecking Tib's brown ear en revanche—the whole thing is very doatskin, a word which you perhaps don't understand, but which I, who have invented a Dog Language—which I call Canish—and written a Dog Dictionary and Grammar, know comprehends the very quint-essence of Darlingry.

That *is* a disgusting story about C. Mathews, but then every one knows it is not exactly the Gospel according to St. Matthew. We also have a bright sun here, but the cold is something fearful, and the Dee is now so solid that carts and carriages can traverse it. The times are equally hard for the poor—and, ibid, the hearts of those who have ample means to relieve them.

I have just had a letter from Paris filled with Louis Napoléon's love for his wife. La pauvre

Impératrice! It is always suspicious, not to say ominous, when husbands profess great love for their wives, without citing that model woman owner, Harry the Eighth. We all know that Cicero wrote to his *dear* Terentia, "Mea lux! mea vita!! mea desideria!!! fidelissima et optima conjux!!!!"—which did not prevent his repudiating her six weeks after to marry a rich heiress of eighteen, et voilà les hommes!

I am sorry to say that the last leaf fell from the beautiful Camelia to-day, and there is nothing now left but the bare stem and leaves—like a poor withered heart, stripped of its last hope and become a bore for all the world.

J'ai bien considerée le texte of Mme. Votre Mère—"Le Méchant fait un œuvre qui lui trompe"—et voice le seul sermon que je puis faire la dessus—oui c'en est ainsi avec les méchants en général; mais mon méchant à moi fait un œuvre qui trompe tour le monde hormis sa victime.

Sorry to say it, but your Jew conundrum is atrocious—anything but quite the cheese—and proves that there is even *more-de-cay* in wit than I thought there was. How flat to the racy wellings of the old spring—like old Curran, when he was running in great haste down Piccadilly to

catch the last postman and was stopped by an inveterate button holder to ask him what he thought of the taking of Algiers?—"Pooh! pooh!" said he, "Sufficient for the day (the *Dey*) is the evil thereof!" . . .

Your much obliged,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

S. C. Hall preserved his impressions of Lady Bulwer Lytton in his *Retrospect of a Long Life* as follows: "A young and singularly beautiful lady, whose form and features were then as near perfection as art, or even fancy, could conceive them. Lively, vivacious, with a ready, if not a brilliant, word to say to every member of the assembly—displaying marvellous grace in all her movements, yet cast in a mould that indicated great physical strength—she received in full measure the admiration she evidently coveted, and did her utmost to obtain. Her abundant hair fell over the whitest of shoulders; her complexion was the happiest mixture of white and red; in fact, she was as perfect a realisation of the beauty whose charm is of the form, and not

of the spirit, as poet ever set forth in words or painter upon canvas. It was not difficult, however, to perceive . . . something that gave disquieting intimations concerning the spirit that looked out from her brilliant eyes—that he who wooed her would probably be a happier man if content to regard her as we do some beautiful caged wild creature of the woods—at a safe and secure distance."

Concerning the Bulwers' unhappy married life S. C. Hall said, "the faults were on both sides. On the one there was no effort—no thought indeed, to make home a sanctuary, a source of triumph or of consolation; on the other there seemed the indifference that arises from satiety."

Mrs. Hall was Irish, and Lady Bulwer Lytton had no partiality for her compatriots. On one occasion her husband entertained Daniel O'Connell and other Irish Members to dinner, and S. C. Hall relates: "The next day I saw Mrs. Bulwer directing some arrangements in the dining-room, which she told me she was fumigating in order to get rid of the brogue." It is

evident that Hall and Lady Bulwer Lytton were not much in sympathy at the time they were accustomed to meet, as their mutual criticisms of each other in after years demonstrate.

Sydney Lady Morgan, from personal pique, disliked Lady Bulwer Lytton, and wrote of her countrywoman thus in her diary, July 29, 1833: "Mrs. Bulwer Lytton handsome, insolent, and unamiable, to judge by her style and manners; she and all the *demi-esprits* looked daggers at *me*: not one of them have called on me, and in society they get out of my way. How differently I should behave to them if they came to Ireland."

This passage may, of course, refer to the novelist's mother as his wife in 1833 was merely Mrs. Bulwer: but in view of Lady Morgan's use of the word "handsome," she no doubt was speaking of Rosina Bulwer, and added the word Lytton by mistake.

. . . . .

February 26, 1855.

Allons donc! cher M. Chalon, vous vous moquez de moi comme de l'an quarante en datant

les *singeries* de la malheureuse L. E. L. De quarante ans! vû, qu'elle naquit en 1802: de sorte que pour cela il aura fallu qu'elle eut devenu guenon pour plaire à l'ourangoutang en lunettes à 13 ans! c'est par trop fort! de montrer de pareilles *faiblesses* si tôt.

Poor Pickersgill * used to be famous for throwing up those formidable fortifications of black hats and feathers. I remember his studio was once barricaded with a perfect bastion of Mrs. P. alone repeated in that costume, so that on first entering one fancied that one had got by mistake into the Old Hats Club.

Toutes les Belles Mères tiennent tant soit peu au diable, but to give you an idea of the *extra* strength of mine, the moment I was turned out of my home she invited two of her son's mistresses (that wretched L. E. L. and Mrs. Beaumont alias Miss Laura Deacon, whom I have since been informed was a great—and worthy—crony of L. E. L.) to Knebworth; but England is a moral country very! And that old wretch used occasionally to give £500 to Bible and Missionary Societies!!! You wonder that Lord C. is not cut by his Peers? C'est sans

* H. W. Pickersgill, the portrait painter.

doute qu'ils sont, pour le plus part, pire que lui. The great difference that I see between Lady Blessington and D'Orsay is, that *his Art* was overrated and *hers* (which was supreme) underrated—and so they both achieved their one great aim, that of gulling the sapient public. Ah! my dear M. Chalon, if you think giving sovereigns to people in distress, or even more than half one possesses sometimes to extricate very worthless people from difficulties, who repay one's "folly" with the blackest ingratitude—if you, I say, think this such a redeeming point, I only wish you had the writing of my life. Your anecdote of Lane* only adds another to my long list of disgusts at the private detraction and published adulation that goes on among artists and authors. I had quite enough of this with Moore and Campbell about poor Lord Byron.

As they have secured Wagner between Lumley and Gye there will be no lack of a Mephistopheles.†

This arctic cold brings fresh horrors every day.

* R. J. Lane, portrait painter.

† Wagner came to England this year, 1855, to conduct the London Philharmonic Society's concerts. He had already composed *Rienzi*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*.

Last Thursday a poor young shepherd was frozen to death, having lost his way in the mountains. He was found the next morning quite dead, with his poor innocent faithful dog trying to lick him back to life. I grieved the more at this, having once seen the poor man when staying last summer at Lady Marshall's, a neighbour of mine, who has a very pretty dairy maid to whom the poor shepherd was to have been married. On Saturday they had lighted a large fire on the river, which lasted all night, which the gamins du village were singing and dancing round to warm themselves.

How disgusting are the daily puffs about the Queen inspecting the poor wounded soldiers from the Crimea; but you do not hear of her saying one kind word to them, or of her *giving* them anything, ce que fera mieux leur affaire. No, I did not send General Routine's marriage*

* A jeu d'esprit on the Crimean War mismanagement:—

MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.

On the first instant, by special licence, at the house of the Bride's Father: General Routine, of the Veteran Battalion, to Miss Management, daughter and sole heiress of the Right Hon. *Job* Management, of Downing Street, London, and Windsor, Berks. Immediately after the ceremony the happy pair left Town for the Crimea, where it is their intention to pass some time, notwithstanding the base attempts of *The*

to *Punch*, for they, or none of the clique, would put in anything I wrote, however they may occasionally *steal* mots of mine printed and published years ago. . . .

Adieu, cher Monsieur Chalon—encore vous remerciant mille fois de vos spirituelles et charmantes lettres qui sont de véritables rayons de soleil à travers mon desert.

Croyez moi votre bien dévouée,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Lady Bulwer Lytton's supposition in the next letter that the extract she sent from *Punch* was intended by Thackeray to refer to her husband was no doubt correct. Rarely, even at that period of bludgeoning methods in criticism and satire, was an author the victim of such sustained and violent attack as Bulwer Lytton suffered at the hands of Thackeray. It is true that the grosser satires appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* when Thackeray was yet in his callow days and

Times and other journals to oust the veteran General from his command there in favour of his as yet little employed contemporary, General Utility.

unknown to fame. But that cannot excuse the amazing vulgarity of *Mr. Yellowplush's Ajew*, where Bulwer's every trait, even to his lisp, was held up to ridicule; or the extraordinary personalities in the review of *Ernest Maltravers*, when, instead of criticising the book, Thackeray rode off on a dissertation against the habits of Bulwer—"if he would but leave off scents for his handkerchief, and oil for his hair: if he would but confine himself to three clean shirts in a week, a couple of coats in a year, a beef-steak and onions for dinner, his beaker a pewter pot, his carpet a sanded floor, how much might be made of him even yet." And yet it was this sort of "personal journalism" which so annoyed Thackeray in after years when he himself was the subject of it, in a very modified degree, and caused the famous combat with Edmund Yates.

In *Punch* Thackeray dealt with Bulwer Lytton more fittingly—*George de Barnwell* was an excellent burlesque of the novelist's style—though some of the pleasantries did not err on the side of politeness. Thus, on the publication of

Zanoni: "It is not true that the hero of Sir E. L. Bulwer's new novel, is, as usual, a portraiture of himself. The report arose from a notion that the title of the work is the Italian form of the word 'Zany,' or 'Za-ninny.'"

Many years later, in 1861, Thackeray wrote a graceful letter to Lytton expressing regret and apology for the *Yellowplush* bêtises of his youth. He liked *The Caxtons*, but his attitude to Bulwer Lytton's earlier work is best expressed in this letter, written to Lady Blessington: "I wish to egsplain what I meant last night with regard to a certain antipathy to a certain great author. I have no sort of personal dislike to Sir E. L. B. L., on the contrary, the only time I met him, at the immortal Ainsworth's years ago, I thought him very pleasant, and I know from his conduct to my dear little Blanchards that he can be a most generous and delicate-minded friend. BUT there air sentiments in his writings which always anger me, big words which make me furious, and a premeditated fine writing against which I can't help rebelling."

It is curious that Lady Bulwer Lytton does not refer more often to Thackeray's lampoons upon her husband, which no doubt she appreciated. But, rather wisely, Thackeray does not seem to have taken any definite side in this notorious matrimonial quarrel, and so could not be claimed as a supporter by either of the protagonists.

LLANGOLLEN CEMETERY,

March 17, 1855.

A thousand thanks, dear Mr. Chalon, for your beautiful *envoye*—the flowers are all the happier for being single. The sprig of Daphne is very sweet, having more of her sire Ladon about her than of her mother Terra, for it is not at all "of the earth, earthy." To be sure, I remember that extensive Mrs. Fitzgerald, who, like one of Towpion's old-fashioned watches, was always so thickly studded with jewels. When I was last at Brighton, of a day that I could not get out, if I had the good fortune to meet her anywhere at dinner, I used to walk round her for exercise. . . . Alas! no, dear Mr. Chalon, I have not the least hope of seeing your beautiful collection this

spring,* and as for books, I am only writing my life, which ought to be called *The Nemesis of Humbug*. I have been reading that most disgusting and mendacious book of Dr. Madden's (which is enough to madden any honest person), I mean his *Literary Life of Lady Blessington*, which should be called his *Literary Lie of Lady Blessington*—c'était plus fort que moi, so I have crammed it full of marginal notes, giving the true version of most of the lies. Nothing can equal the bad taste of the book, unless it be the bad French, which is more than usually atrocious even for Newby's printing. And English compositors invariably seem to deal with French accents as confectioners do with caraway seeds—put them into a sieve and shake them out promiscuously. It is the old story of save me from my friends, for with all this plaister and stucco, by Dr. Madden's own showing, Lady Blessington is the beau idéal of hollow, heartless humbugs, toadying à l'outrance those disreputable literary sbirri like Fonblanque, Forster, and Sir Liar, who, upon the scratch-me-and-I'll-scratch-you principle

* A. E. Chalon exhibited a collection of his own and his brother's works in London this year, 1855, which was not very largely attended by the public.

(the *only* principle *they* possess), puffed her ditto for her dinners and Opera Box and the *Lords* she brought their canaille-aleties and venal-eties acquainted with. And in the puffs of poor Miss Landon's high-mindedness they prove more clearly than any enemy could have done how she and her friends completely bullied that sneaking Mr. Maclean into marrying a woman for whom he did not care, and of whom he had good reason to have so bad an opinion. The only things that redeem the utter trash of the book are these gems of letters of old Landor's and those delicious ones of Charley Mathews'. But the refreshing naïveté of poor D'Orsay's letter to Dr. Quin, remonstrating with him for his *persiflage* the day before at Chesterfield House, lest it should lower the higher standard of humbug that he, D'Orsay, had established in public opinion, is *impayable* and quite more verdant than I should have given D'Orsay credit for. As for poor Lord Blessington, I think the Protectionists ought to have erected a statue to him for doing away with *protection* by *espousing* the Farmer's grievances!* I think that melo-

* After separating from her first husband, Captain Farmer, who disgracefully ill-used her, the future Lady Blessington lived under the protection of Captain Jenkins, to whom Lord

dramatic scene where Lady Blessington rushes in, in Dublin, My Lording her husband, and reminding him that a Mountjoy never yet forfeited his word, and if *he*, Lord B., did, *she* should be ashamed of bearing his name, is really *too* ridiculous, as it conjures up ideas of that awful woman at the Princess's who does the mother in *The Corsican Brothers* or the other formidable "British Female" in red cotton velvet at the Surrey, booming out in true Poluphloisboio Thalasses style a similar speech to the anti-domestic-felicity Bluebeard of the night. I must say that I think Lord Hertford paid very dearly for Lady B.'s picture at the Gore House sale,* considering the original had been all her life *si bon marché!* The truth has now come out, but she used to tell her dear friend, Sir Liar (who, by the bye, with his disgusting little abortion of a brother, Henry, were always abusing and ridiculing her behind her back, and they it was who told me everything infamous of Lady B., D'Orsay,

Blessington sent a cheque for £10,000 when he, the earl, established the lady in London preparatory to his marriage with her.

* Lord Hertford gave £366 for Lawrence's portrait of Lady Blessington: it is in the Wallace Collection.

and Lord Blessington, and the revolting vice of their Italian menage, and Sir Liar used to make out that Lady Blessington drank, which I never believed . . .) that she only—with all her dinners —spent twelve hundred a year, and did not owe a shilling!! The moral of which was, of course, what a bad manager I was, when he insisted upon living at the rate of £6000 a year, not to be able to do it on £3000! I was really sick with contempt and disgust at Dr. Madden's barefaced puff about Sir Liar's *devotion* to his mother being such an amiable trait in his character. Now, a *really* good son indulging in the very natural feeling of affection for his mother would not require to be *puffed* for such a matter of course occurrence. A man like Charles Kean, who defended his mother against his father's cruelties, and worked for the support of a very vulgar and unpresentable old mother as he did, *really deserves* praise, though he is by no means an amiable person in other relationships of life. But what is the truth about that loathsome monster and triton of the Humbugs, Sir Liar, is—when he kicked me within an inch of my life a month before my first child was born, and I nearly died of it, his amiable speech was, "D—n you, madam, you can bear

nothing: I have often felled my mother to the earth." And on other occasions, when I have reminded him that his mother was not well, and he ought to go and see her, it used to be, "D—n you, and my mother too." Which did not, however, prevent his adulating her in *print*, and evincing the most unremitting and genuine devotion to her unentailed property. . . . Poor General Bulwer,* who had been ten years screwing his courage to the sticking-point to marry the Gorgon Heiress of Knebworth, died without his errand after all, as old Lytton did not rejoin his friends Voltaire and Rousseau in the Infernal Regions till five years after his son-in-law's death; and that is the way that most wicked old woman—who not only encouraged, but trained, her son "Eddard" (as she used to call him) in every vice—came to have uncontrolled power over Knebworth.

My only consolation about this disgusting book is what Madden himself says in the Appendix, in trying to blacken Mr. Maclean to patch up L. E. L. apropos of that horrid Mrs. Thomson's pamphlet, *i.e.* that "The minds of people in the long run revolt at attempts to force conclusions upon them which are not legitimately arrived at."

* The novelist's father.

But as for that Madden, he would say anything after having had the face to print in the teeth of the London public that Disraeli was reserved (!!!) and thoughtful in society! He had better have said "shy and diffident" at once, as the game of the whole of that infamous clique is to have themselves puffed in print for the virtues and qualities diametrically opposite to the vices and failings they possess. But I took care to put a note about that other charlatan Maclise*—stating that his and Disraeli's intriguing *en partie carrée* with Lady Sykes at the same time as Lord Lyndhurst, was the first honourable stepping-stone of the be-puffed artist's and the trading politician's fortunes. Were you not highly amused and greatly enlightened by Mr. Snob Willis's description of Sir Liar's "Joyous"!! "Boyish"!!! cordial manner at Lady Blessington's, and his having the appearance of being "the best fellow in the world"!!!† Here is the real

* Daniel Maclise (1806–69), the future R.A., arrived in London from his native city of Cork in 1827, when he at once began to achieve success.

† N. P. Willis, the American journalist (who had started life as a type-setter in his father's office), arrived in London in 1834, a cute, vulgar young man of twenty-seven, with letters of introduction from Walter Savage Landor. Willis, in his *Pencillings by the Way*, said of Bulwer: "He ran up to Lady

history of this. Ours was the first house in London where this Willis had made his appearance; the house which I had just furnished, I may say it now, certainly was very beautiful, and Snob Willis appeared perfectly dazzled, forthwith firing off the first of his "Pencillings" to an American magazine, and not only giving an elaborate account of our house, but a somewhat too flattering description of me, and of one who could not be flattered—*i.e.* my poor little darling dog Fairy, whose picture Landseer had just done in his very best style and very generously given me (ah! thereby hangs one of the sad episodes of my life!). Sir Liar could not brook this flourish of trumpets about me, so when Willis's "Pencillings" were coming out in a collected form and a second edition, he got his dear friend, Lady Blessington, to tell Willis that he (Sir Liar) had a great objection to having his wife noticed in print* (and he might have added

Blessington with the joyous heartiness of a boy let out of school; and the 'how d'ye do, Bulwer?' went round, as he shook hands with everybody, in the style of welcome usually given to 'the best fellow in the world.'"

* It is true that in later editions of Willis's *Pencillings by the Way* all references to Lady Bulwer Lytton (or Mrs. Bulwer as she then was) were omitted.

out of it), but that instead he could sketch in a more detailed and elaborated account of himself, whereupon Lady B. gave Willis the foregoing catalogue raisonné of the perfections he wished to be accused of, winding up with his *brilliancy* in conversation, a man that is as deaf as a post! Et voila comme on écrit les mémoirs de nos jours: mais moi j'écrirai l'Histoire d'une bien autre façon.

Did I ever tell you that that full-length picture which you painted long ago of me, and which on leaving England I left with the present Lady Harrington, Heath, from the beauty of the painting and the composition of what you artists call the ordonnance of the picture, wanted to engrave it for *The Book of Beauty:* but it was no sooner in his hands for that purpose than Lady Blessington went to him and said Sir Liar had flown into a terrible fury at the idea of such a thing, saying, "If he wants beauty, let him take my picture"!!!* Apropos I enclose you a facsimile of

* In her book, *Cheveley; or, The Man of Honour* (1839), Lady Bulwer Lytton introduces this incident, but there states that it was her mother-in-law's portrait that was suggested as a substitute for her own. In this work Bulwer Lytton and his wife figure as "Lord and Lady de Clifford"; N. P. Willis is "Snobguess"; John Forster is "Fuzboz"; Albany

him I cut out of *Punch* long ago which I know Thackeray meant for him, but let me have it back for I would not lose it for the world, and I am sure you will believe me when I tell you I would fifty thousand times rather lose the original!

I like the letter saying that no one had ever *presumed* to caricature Fonblanque! Why I defy even you to do so; inasmuch as nature has been beforehand with every one by making the man himself a flagrant caricature of Mephistopheles. Next to Satan reproving sin, the richest thing I ever heard is Sir Liar lauding Fonblanque's* honour in one of his letters to Messalina Blessington—yes, the honour of a man . . . who would swear black was white in *The Examiner* for any man who would ask him to dine off a silver plate, and meet Lords and Ladies; it is certainly very great and quite à la portée of the Gore House clique, who instead of the "Gorgeous Lady Blessington" ought in common gratitude to have called her the "*Gorge-us* Lady Blessington." I

Fonblanque is "Fonnoir"; Henry Bulwer is "Herbert Grimstone," and A. E. Chalon is mentioned by his own name.

* Albany Fonblanque (1793–1872), the editor of *The Examiner*. He also formed one of the Dickens, Forster, and Macready set.

LIBRARY OF THE

think the letters signed L. N. at the end of the book, from the soi-disant madman, were in reality from Louis Napoleon, written in a cipher preconcerted between him, Lady B., and D'Orsay. Here is another charming little trait of Sir Liar's sincerity and friendship. When we were going to Italy the first time, Lady B. had given him a mail bag of letters of introduction to very agreeable people; so he being, as Willis says, "the best fellow in the world," pressed her to give him anything, everything not exceeding the size of a house; whereupon, after much pressing, she gave him one of her novels to take to Mr. Landor at Florence (by the bye, if ever I have the pleasure of seeing you again I'll tell you how old Landor behaved to me, which I much regretted, as I liked the man and venerate his genius, but this, if ever you hear it, will give you a good idea of the force of the Arcana-cana of Gore House). But to return to Sir Liar, in one of his periodical furies he flings poor Lady B.'s books out of the carriage window into the Lake at Bolsano, and at Florence sits down and writes her a long and graphic letter deliberately stating that he had been robbed in the Apennines, and though he had lost money and other valuables, the only things he regretted

were the books she had entrusted to him. Being in the habit of working up his plots elaborately, he even carried the farce so far as to blow up the courier for the loss, fearing he might peach on our return to her servants, whereupon that worthy was furious and began cosa stupenda-ing at a great rate, and said to my maid, "Sangue de Dio! he nevere lose noting de whole way boat his tempere, and dat not for long, as he find him again to lose at every poste and kick la signora." Is not this trait almost as amiable as his devotion to his mother? I only wonder he has not made them write him up upon his conjugal devotion, at the same time lamenting that it should have degenerated into uxoriousness!! But depend upon it, if *I* were but dead to-morrow you would have that next, so be prepared.

After one week's sunny and almost Neapolitan weather, we are again snowed up. Poor Tib bears the want of exercise better than I do and thrives marvellously on his saute almonde du lit à la table de la table au lit, and unites with me in loves and canineries to your doggies.

Sincerely hoping that you won't die of the

visitation of this letter, believe me ever, dear Mr. Chalon,

Yours sincerely *though*

ROSINA *BULWER LYTTON.*

N.P. Willis's description of Lady Bulwer Lytton was in *The New York Mirror* (4th April, 1835), wherein his *Pencillings by the Way* were first published:

"An Evening party at Bulwer's. Not yet perfectly initiated in London hours, I arrived not far from eleven and found Mrs. Bulwer alone in her illuminated rooms, whiling away an expectant hour in playing with a King Charles Spaniel, that seemed by his fondness and delight to appreciate the excessive loveliness of his mistress. As far off as America, I may express even in print an admiration which is no heresy in London.

"The author of *Pelham* is a younger son and depends on his writings for a livelihood, and, truly, measuring works of fancy by what they will bring (not an unfair standard perhaps), a

N. P. WILLIS

glance around his luxurious and elegant rooms is worth reams of puff in the quarterlies. He lives in the heart of the fashionable quarter of London, where rents are ruinously extravagant, entertains a great deal, and is expensive in all his habits, and for this pay Messrs. Clifford, Pelham, and Aram—(it would seem) most excellent bankers. As I looked at the beautiful woman seated on the costly ottoman before me, waiting to receive the rank and fashion of London, I thought that our close-fisted littérateur never had better reason for his partial largesse.

"One of the first persons who came was Lord Byron's sister, a thin, plain, middle-aged woman, of a very serious countenance, and with very cordial and pleasing manners. The rooms soon filled, and two professed singers went industriously to work in their vocation at the piano. . . . Sheil, the Irish orator, a small, dark, deceitful, but talented looking man, with a very disagreeable speaking voice, stood in a corner, very earnestly engaged in conversation with the aristocratic old Earl of Clarendon. . . . Fonblanque

of *The Examiner*, with his pale and dislocated looking face, stood in the doorway between the two rooms, making the amiable with a ghastly smile to Lady Stepney, the patroness of all callow poets and new-found geniuses of every description. The 'bilious Lord Durham,' as the papers call him, with his Brutus head. . . stood. . . talking politics with Bowring; and near them, leaned over a chair the Prince Moscowa, the son of Marshal Ney, . . . unconscious of everything but the presence of the Honourable Mrs. Leicester Stanhope, a very lovely woman. . . . "

Disraeli also mentioned Lady Bulwer Lytton's dog "Fairy" in an account of a dinner at the Bulwers about this date. He said the Hostess was a blaze of jewels and looked like Juno—"only instead of a peacock, she had a dog in her lap, called Fairy, and not bigger than a bird of paradise and quite as brilliant. We drank champagne out of a saucer of ground glass, mounted on a pedestal of cut glass." This seems to indicate that the wide circular champagne glasses had just come into fashion, superseding the tall beakers until then in use.

Lady Bulwer Lytton

LLANGOLLEN CEMETERY,

March 21, 1855.

Alas! dear Mr. Chalon, I should be too glad to comply with your request if I could, but the dear friend to whom I gave that picture * has been long dead, and I am not on terms with her husband and never could succeed in getting it back, so that I don't even know where it is. A thousand thanks for the Frontispiece, which I like all the better for being a *mild* caricature of myself.

As the "Life" will be a long affair, what think you of writing one of those saleable shilling or small half-crown books to be called *The Nemesis of Humbug*, showing up the whole gang and the whole system, to appear anonymously—something in the style of Guicciardini's "Maxims." I could do it *con amore*, and have two delicious epigraphs—upon Hypocrisy and Humbug—from Luttrell and Douglas Jerrold: the only difficulty would be to find a publisher; they are all so clique bound, and to publish it with the sort of nonentities with whom I am driven to publish

* Chalon's portrait of Lady Bulwer Lytton painted some sixteen years before.

my novels would be tantamount to putting it behind the fire—for my books are *not* published, they are only misprinted, and myself grossly and personally abused by that infamous clique, whenever one appears. I don't wonder at your blood boiling at the barefaced, gross, and scandalous injustice you and your equally gifted brother have received from that human-infernal machine of a Press Gang. My blood, I know, not only boils but *boils over*; however you can carry it *vi et armis*—or rather by force of genius with the Public: I cannot, the ramification of extinguishers being instantly down upon me at whatever point I try to find an egress. I have no doubt that by applying to the London publisher who publishes Fanny Fern's books—alias Nathaniel Cooke, Milford House, Strand, he could easily get for you the American magazine in which Willis's first *Pencillings by the Way* appeared, with the obnoxious description of me.* I suppose you are aware that Fanny Fern is only a *nom de plume* and that she is Snob Willis's sister,

* At the time of the publication of the book, Lady Bulwer Lytton wrote in her Journal, December 22, 1835: "Read Mr. Willis's *Pencillings by the Way*, and very racy and pleasant they are."

and this last tale of hers—*Ruth Hall*—clever like all she writes, but *intensely* vulgar like the whole of that class of American literature, is *sensé* to be her own history (except that she has not that amiable *dead* husband, the most amiable thing a husband can be, but is separated from an unamiable living one), and the brother Hyacinth, the Tuft-hunter, is meant for N. P. Willis, her real brother, who really (worthy of the Gore House clique) *did* leave her to starve till she made a name and a fame and did not want him, when he of course became very anxious to *sister* her, though in her misery he took care never to *brother* her. If you saw Cooke you might sound him as to whether he would publish the *Nemesis* in a square half-crown illustrated form, and if he would—"by Jove, Sir, I'll *do it*" and avenge you and myself too, and as there would be *no names* mentioned, only certain *facts* and the iniquitous *system* well exposed, they could not take hold of it ; and if only *properly* brought out, it would run along the railways like electric telegraph wires and soon shiver their chronic humbug.* I agree with

* Lady Bulwer Lytton duly wrote *Nemesis*. It was not published during her lifetime, but most of the manuscript was quoted in Miss Devey's *Life of Rosina Lady Lytton*.

you nothing can be more infamous than the betrayal of private letters throughout that disgusting book of Madden's. N.B. Remember that whatever I write to you or to anybody else about that Infernal Clique and its Triton of the Humbugs, Sir Liar, is *not* private and confidential but *public* and *diffusive*. In one of his letters to Messalina Blessington, where he so paternally and amiably alludes to having been to Brighton while his son was at school there, you must know that his son was *then* with me in Ireland and was not at school for three years after that.* How much better his threatening letter to me will read in print, written before I published my first book, in which the following honourable and manly passage occurs: "If you publish that or any other book, Madam, *I will ruin you.* I'll say that you were my mistress, that you drink, you forge. Beware! I have not hitherto crossed your path—woe be to you when once I do!" Don't you think Messalina Blessington had reason to talk of his noble mind and his deep feeling! She ought to have added *another*

* Madden assigned this letter to 1837, the year when Lady Bulwer Lytton was in Ireland with her children: they were removed from her charge in 1838.

flourish of trumpets about his exalted love of Truth. When I showed this infamous letter to every one—the only notice I took of it—the monster denied it upon *oath* (so he did being the author of *The New Timon*), and said it was a forgery of mine! but I have got the letter, post-mark, frank, and all, with all his other abominations of love (?!) and hate, and they shall be not printed but facsimiled.

How I should like to see that picture of yours of Lady Byron; but I think it is greatly to your credit, and you ought to be highly flattered at not being mentioned as one among the immured animalcula found in the Gore House sewer! How shocked those worthies would no doubt be (in print!) at my staying at home and scribbling to you instead of being at church doing penance for the sins of the Government; but as every day that I have been in this place has been to me a day of fast and humiliation, I did not think it necessary to perform a work of supererogation, which perhaps it is to assure you, dear Mr. Chalon, that I am ever sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Une idée! At each of the ends of the cat-o'-

nine-tails we might have small but *striking* likenesses of the Chiefs of the Clique—Sir Liar, that brute Forster, Fonblanque, Dickens, etc. Forgive this horrid blurred letter, but Tib has upset the glass of water with your beautiful camellias.

P.S.—Deux heures après.

Of course Snob Madden had no idea that the letters I allude to in the Appendix were written by a real live Emperor en rôle de bourgeois fou, but such is my conjecture—that these letters were L.N.'s, written as I told you in cipher, and I am pretty sure I am right; and if ever I see his Majesty again I'll try and ascertain the fact, though, like other great (?) men, I believe it is difficult to elicit the truth from him. It was Lady Harrington who wrote me word of that Heath affair while the picture was in her custody. I have got her letter about it which shall in due time be published to authenticate the fact. If the *Nemesis* ever comes off, I'll do it in Dialogues, such as those between "Testy and Sensitive" in Beresford's *Miseries of Human Life*, as that form gives one more scope for *saying* one's *say* and hitting the right nails upon the head. If you go to Cooke's, Milford House,

in the Strand, about the American magazine containing the *first puffs* of the "Pencillings," pray don't forget to sound him touching the publication of the said *Nemesis*, and if he would undertake it, be sure and swear him to secrecy touching the authorship; I know it would have a run and cause an epidemic, not to say a mortality among the Clique. Tib, with those most innocent paws of his, begs a thousand pardons for his "beginning of strife," alias "letting out of water" over your letter, but as it was about that infamous Gang he says *blots* and blurs were all the more appropriate. Encore adieu.

T. A. V.

The New Timon, referred to by Lady Bulwer Lytton in the preceding letter, caused a memorable literary duel. In 1830, Tennyson had published his youthful volume of verse, containing among other things some puerile *Lines to a Darling Room* (which particular piece he afterwards suppressed). In 1845, Tennyson received a pension of £200, and Bulwer Lytton in *The New Timon* recalled the poet's early effusions in a somewhat too sarcastic manner:

"The jingling medley of purloin'd conceits
Outbabying Wordsworth and outglittering Keats;
Where all the airs of patchwork pastoral chime
To drown the ears in Tennysonian rhyme

. . . . .

Let school-miss Alfred vent her chaste delight
On 'darling little rooms so warm and light';
Chant 'I'm a-weary' in infectious strain,
And catch the 'blue fly singing i' the pane.'"

To this attack Tennyson retorted, in *Punch* (February 28, 1846), most vitriolically with his *New Timon and the Poets*:

"We know him, out of Shakespeare's art,
And those fine curses which he spoke;
The old Timon, with his noble heart,
That, strongly loathing, greatly broke.

So died the Old: here comes the New—
Regard him: a familiar face:
I thought we knew him: What it's you,
The padded man—that wears the stays—

Who kill'd the girls and thrill'd the boys,
With dandy pathos when you wrote,
A Lion, you, that made a noise,
And shook a mane en papillotes.

And once you tried the Muses too;
You fail'd, Sir: therefore now you turn,
You fall on those who are to you,
As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long-enduring hopes,
And careless what this hour may bring,
Can pardon little would-be Popes
And Brummels, when they try to sting.

An artist, Sir, should rest in Art,
And waive a little of his claim;
To have the deep poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame.

But you, Sir, you are hard to please;
You never look but half content;
Nor like a gentleman at ease,
With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spites and what with fears,
You cannot let a body be:
It's always ringing in your ears,
'They call this man as good as *me*.'

What profits now to understand
The merits of a spotless shirt—
A dapper boot—a little hand—
If half the little soul is dirt.

You talk of tinsel! why we see
The old mark of rouge upon your cheeks,
You prate of nature! You are he
That spilt his life about the cliques.

A TIMON you! Nay, nay for shame:
It looks too arrogant a jest—
That fierce old man—to take *his* name
You bandbox. Off and let him rest."

Tennyson, however, soon realised that he had been too vindictive, and so the following week *Punch* contained his *After-Thought*:

"Ah, GOD! the petty fools of rhyme
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent stars;—

That hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite,
That pinch their brothers in the throng,
And scratch the very head for spite,—

And strain to make an inch of room
For their sweet selves and cannot hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs, and all things here;

When one small touch of Charity
Could lift them nearer Godlike state
Than if the crowded Orb should cry
Like those that cried Diana great.

And I too talk, and lose the touch
I talk of. Surely, after all,
The noblest answer unto such
Is kindly silence when they brawl."

Tennyson and Bulwer Lytton regretted this affair in after years, and said civil things of each other.* But it will ever be difficult to find a

* See Note A, p. 311.

plausible excuse for Bulwer Lytton's denial of the authorship of *The New Timon* in 1846.

LLANGOLLEN,

March 24, 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I cannot understand how you could so strangely have misunderstood my letter, as I therein told you most explicitly that I did not even know where the picture * was now, not being on terms with the husband of my late friend, which, had the picture been still in the possession of Lady Harrington I could not have said! I moreover further (apropos of the Heath affair) alluded to the time when the picture had been in the custody of the present Lady Harrington, who consequently could not be the present Lord H.'s mother—that good lady having been gathered to her fathers many years before you painted that picture of me!! Therefore, I have only to repeat that the picture having long ago been removed from the care of the *present* Lady Harrington (a chip of old Mrs. Wood), and I not being on terms or even knowing what part of the world the husband is in, I cannot apply for it, and even if I did know his whereabouts, having failed

* Her earlier portrait by Chalon.

to obtain the picture by fair means, I should certainly not condescend to make, *or authorise to be made*, any further application for it; and there is one *great* and paramount good in your not having it, *i.e.* the reproduction of it might endanger your new-fledged *à bon pied* with the Clique, and only think what a terrible thing that would be.

I am sorry I should have alarmed you by my proposition of going to cook: n'ayez pas peur, I can "cook my goose" without letting the slightest flavour of the seasoning—including the *sage*—pollute you. As for Lord Brougham, I have such a supreme contempt for his intense and illimitable rascality that I heed his talents (great as they are) very little, and as for *his* pretended contempt for courts, it is about as superficial as his pretended scientific acquirements, not extending beyond the sample brick of his oft quoted speech of "*I* and the king!" While, with regard to his impartiality, it is like that of most men—merely exercised when it may advance his interest; and never evinced when it might by any possibility militate against it. With reference to his *scientific affiches*, I send you an impromptu of mine some four years ago, when, after he had been flaring up about "Bodies

of Light" at his Château at Cannes, he ran a scientific instrument into his eye which he was carrying in his carriage to some Institute at Paris. . . .

That vulgar 'Ballieuse des rues, Mrs. Fonblanque, like her brute of a husband, had, some years ago, behaved in the most ungrateful and impertinent manner to me. . . . This did not prevent these wretches having the impudence to make up to me when I was last at Brighton, and the she-Fonblanque actually had the audacity to ask me to call upon them to see my god-child—the one through whom, some years ago, I had my unhappy cheek bitten by Sir Liar till the blood streamed down me:* but as

* Lady Bulwer Lytton earlier described the incident thus: "Upon his asking me with whom I was going to the christening of Mr. Fonblanque's child that night, and I replying, 'with Lady Stepney,' he then repeated as fast as he could, a dozen times running, 'My mother calls her that ugly old woman!' He then called out, 'Do you hear me, Madam?' 'Of course I hear you!' 'Then why the —— in —— don't you answer me?' 'I did not think it required an answer.' 'D—— your soul, Madam!' he exclaimed, seizing a carving-knife (for we were at dinner, and he had told the servants to leave the room till he rang), and rushing at me, cried, 'I'll have you to know that whenever *I* do you the honour of addressing you, it requires an answer.' I said, 'For God's sake, take care what

through life I have never had, and sincerely hope I never may have, the prudence and good sense for the sake of my interest (or what in the world is falsely so called) to overlook insult and connive at the grossest injustice, I curtly told her that my contempt and disgust at her husband and his clique was so great that no earthly power would induce me *knowingly* to cross the threshold of any house he inhabited. To which she rather impolitically replied: "I'm sure, Lady Lytton, you cannot hate and despise the whole of that infamous gang more than I do." And certainly at the time I used to be acquainted with them, her abuse and disgusting anecdotes of that brute Forster—old Fonblanque's sub-editor—used to be boundless. But as for me, I am, it would appear, a sort of human spider—only made to extract (for my own detriment) poison from everything, more especially if I go out of my way to serve people, which I am always doing. The amount of enmity

you are about, Edward!' He then dropped the knife and, springing on me, made his great teeth meet in my cheek, and the blood spurted over me. The agony was so great that my screams brought the servants back, and presently Cresson, the cook, seized him by the collar, but he broke from him, and seizing one of the footman's hats in the hall, rushed down Piccadilly."

and villainy I have reaped is something incredible. Here is a charming trait of human (which as a generic term should be spelt *in*-human) nature that I have met since I have been here, so that you see the gloom is not always synonymous with the peace of the grave. You must know that among the numerous adorateurs of the *beaux yeux de sa cassette*, Lady Hotham has a toady and hanger-on called the Chevalier de Birard, a little wizen old Frenchman, whom I think you met the day you dined with me and Miss Ryves at Hereford House. I liked the man because he was French and pitied him because he was poor—or rather felt for him as *only* the poor *can* feel for poverty; so that I used to be ruined in Brougham hire running all over London to try and sell his "Translations," and begging favours, which I certainly neither would nor could have done for myself. But now for the pith of my story. In May, '53, Lady Hotham invited me, as a trip of pleasure, to go with her to Paris, which miserable and memorable expedition I shall never forget, for had we been two escaped paupers out of a workhouse there could not have been more haggling over every *sou*—even at paying the fixed price railway

fares, which she would not trust any of the servants to settle, not even Davis, her butler, who has lived with her for fifty years; and though she was nominally to frank me, she told me before starting that it would be more "prudent," a great word of hers, not to take my maid, and then it would not cost me anything, a broad, though not very ladylike, hint that if I took her I might pay for her myself, which I did, for being far from well at the time I could not do without her. Nor was that *all* I had to pay for, there being a regular fight at every hotel and café about the bills, which always ended in my having to settle, as also for public amusements, catalogues, etc. etc. Her haggling used nearly to get us mobbed. After a fortnight of this pleasant work, to which the fighting and privations in the Crimea were a joke, we returned to England in a violent storm at sea, she kindly leaving me half dead at the hotel at Folkestone. The Sunday evening before we set out on this charming excursion, the Chevalier de Birard and Carew, the sculptor, dined at Hereford House. . . . The Chevalier, in walking with me in the garden, seemed—for him—unusually downcast, which upon my remarking the tears came into his eyes, and he

said which way to turn he knew not, for that the next day he should have all his poor furniture seized for a very paltry arrear of rent which he could not pay. At the moment I sincerely wished I had Lady Hotham's unencumbered £18,000 a year, because, as people say, in my position I have no right to do those things: no beggars, in England, have any right to human feeling. However, I could not resist this poor old man's distress; so, small though the sum was, I gave him more than half I possessed in the world till the next three months came round, and it was not so much the having no money to spend at Paris that was the great sacrifice as the having, on my return, to borrow money from my maid to come down here. Well ça brave—quoique non preux chevalier qui ne perde jamais la carte quand il s'agit de ses propres intérêts—gave me an old tag MS. to try and dispose of in Paris, where Lady H., with her usual amiability and sympathy for misfortunes *she* has never experienced, would not turn one street out of her way or stop five minutes at any door to let me try this forlorn hope; so it ended by my daily trotting over Paris—till I was half dead—in the vain attempt to dispose of this affair; she always

grumping out on my return, "I only hope you'll let de Birard know all the terrible trouble you have taken." "I should be very sorry," said I, "for one had better not attempt to serve people than make a parade of it se faire valoir, more especially to the obligée." No sooner had I arrived at my exile here than the Chevalier inundated me with fulsome letters of gratitude: "I cannot turn in my house but I am reminded of you. Should I have a bed to lie on, a chair to sit on, but for you?" etc., etc., till I implored him to desist, as all this pained me. And whenever I could scrape them, I from time to time sent him a few pounds—certainly not from my superfluities. He was always begging and entreating me to make use of him or employ him in some way or other, as the happiest day of his life, etc., etc., would be if he could do anything for me; meanwhile, ill or well, he took good care to employ me, for he was always sending me his tiresome MSS. to correct and make shipshape, which is much more trouble than writing a book of one's own. He next wrote to me to say that I could do him a great service if I would allow him to republish some old tales of mine which had originally

appeared in *Fraser* and *The New Monthly*, and I was only too happy to put money into his pocket without performing the miracle of taking it out of my own, so I gave him the desired permission. After this he began for four months bothering my life out to write for that *London Journal*, he—de Birard—being a sort of jackal to a man of the name of Stiff, who is the editor and proprietor of it as well as of another paper called *The Weekly Times*. For a long time I was inexorable, saying that poor as I was I had an insuperable objection to write for penny papers: he argued that this was not like *other* penny papers, that it had such an enormous sale, and Stiff was so immensely rich that he did not care what he paid for articles that suited him, and had given de Birard *carte blanche* to say that I might have my own terms, and the Chevalier added, "think what a thing a permanent engagement of this sort would be to you who write so rapidly." I did think of it, and that £1000 or £1200 was not to be despised even when earned through a penny paper; and as I always try to turn the *glossy* side out of that very cross-grained texture, human nature, when I can, I also thought that this was a nice way of this poor Chevalier trying to repay me for the little

services I had rendered him, though at the same time I could not disguise from myself the unpoetical fact that the Chevalier was perfectly aware that the chief part of any money I earned through his instrumentality would most indubitably flow into his pocket. At last I wrote to this Stiff, saying that as he wanted domestic love tales of everyday life, and as that mine was pretty well exhausted, my terms were £25 a tale without my name or initials;—with either I must have £30. By return of post he closed with my proposition and begged I would lose no time in sending him a tale. Thereupon I set to work, and on the fourth day I forwarded him *The Bromelia*, that thing you read. He expressed himself delighted with it and, to my surprise, enclosed me back £25 in three nice crisp new bank notes. I say to my surprise, because it is not usual in periodicals to be paid for one's contributions before they have been printed and published. I was also delighted to think that neither my name nor my initials were to appear to these contributions, and the Chevalier wrote me a flourishing letter of congratulation (very like the ringing of all the church bells for the taking of Sebastopol) saying that Stiff was so

delighted with my diligence and the tale I had sent him that I might consider my fortune made (à la Gil Blas at the Archbishop's!), and that Stiff was a wonderful man, being his own editor and collaborateur for both his papers, and allowed no one to interfere with them (mark this), and de Birard begged me to be sure and have a copy of *Behind the Scenes* sent to *The Weekly Times* as he—de Birard—had such influence there that he would ensure a good review for me (mark this also). Meanwhile *The Bromelia* appeared—with my initials! I wrote to complain and to remonstrate that this was a breach of faith; de Birard put it all upon a mistake and began again entreating that I would give him some commission to do. I did so—to go and see an old governess for me, who lives at Fulham (he, de Birard, living at Chelsea), and as I knew very well he would—if he did not walk—go in an omnibus. I enclosed him £1 for cab hire. He wrote me à se faire valoir letter, making out that the *driver* had lost his way and thereby implying that he had been put to great expense; but as I knew that he had been out from twelve in the day till ten at night, il avait bien assez pour ses frais du voyage, I was not at all uneasy on that score, and when my old

governess came down to see me at Xmas my mind was quite set at ease by her informing me that he had *walked* to Fulham! In this letter about going to see the governess I happened to say, "You need not say anything to Lady Hotham, for with her cast-iron constitution and iced cucumber heart, she cannot feel for those less fortunate than herself." His reply was, "Do you suppose, best of women (!), that I should consult Lady Hotham, or any one else, about obeying your commands?" You will see further on the honourable, gentlemanlike, and grateful use he afterwards made of this essentially private and confidential letter of mine. . . . But to return to Mr. Stiff and his newspapers. Meanwhile my book came out, and after it one of the most scurrilous and personally abusive attacks upon *me*, rather than it, in *The Weekly Times*, that you can imagine. I was astounded, and waited, thinking at all events to get a letter of explanation, apology, or excuses—however lame—either from the Chevalier or his Master, Stiff; but none came. Whereupon I wrote to the Chevalier expressing my disgust and indignation at such black and *gratuitous* treachery, and demanding back a second tale I had sent to *The London*

Journal, as neither he nor Mr. Stiff could suppose that after such black and Judas-like abuse as that in *The Weekly Times* I would ever write another line for him. Mr. Stiff's only reply to this was in the teeth of this prohibition to publish my second tale, with my initials again appended to it; while the Chevalier, forgetting his former statement that Mr. Stiff was his *own* collaborateur, editor, etc., and let no one interfere with his papers, and also forgetting that I knew too much of the arcana of the periodical press not to know that no weekly paper has a reporter, writes me the most disgusting tissue of lies, saying that poor Mr. Stiff was much more to be pitied than any one with regard to that review, that he would sooner have forfeited £1000 than it should have happened—but that he was at the Isle of Wight at the time, and his reporter, to whom he had given the most positive orders for not only a favourable, but a flattering, review (as if reporters, even where they exist, ever did write reviews), had disobeyed him; for the truth was that The Guild (or more properly speaking *Guilt*) of Literature and Art had a pot-house in the Strand, called "The Cheshire Cheese," where all the reporters and underlings of the press met and stuffed and drank

once a week at the expense of *The Guilt*, and when any one of these were turned away from any of the papers they were on for doing the dirty work of the Clique—as in the instance of the abuse of my book—they were supported by *The Guilt* while out of employment till they got a fresh engagement.

I wrote the Chevalier word that I did not in the least doubt *The Guilt* being capable of any villainy, but all his other fictions I refuted with facts; whereupon he changed his tack and wrote me a series of fresh falsehoods which quite contradicted the former ones, always however puffing off this Stiff as the soul of honour and incapable of behaving ill to any one, and winding up with saying (quite oblivious of his former boast) "but even if it was as you *seem* to think (good this!) so dishonourable to publish your initials, and even if that review were ten times worse (if worse it could be?), what earthly influence have *I* with Mr. Stiff and his papers?" Now knowing what abject cowards and servile tools poverty makes of most people, had this little reptile honestly said to me "he has behaved shamefully to you, broken faith in every way with you, and I am only grieved that in my

anxiety to serve you I should have been the innocent cause of entailing upon you such annoyance, but I dare not break with him, as you know unfortunately, Lady Lytton, my bread depends upon him," I should have been the *first* to have urged him by no means to do so; but what so thoroughly exasperated and disgusted me was this man continuing to write me the most fulsome and flummerising letters without ever once making a proper honest explanation of all this crooked affair or even a decent apology, so that I could see (to use a vulgar expression) that his game was to do Mr. Stiff's dirty work coûte qu'il coûte, but to leave no stone unturned to keep me as good milch cow also; and from his subsequent conduct my opinion of the man is that for a £20 note he would sell his own father, and that he was set on by George Beauclerk, the latter being instigated thereto by Sir Liar, to work heaven and earth to set Lady Hotham against me, as from the extraordinary liking—or rather *enjouement*—she professed for me at one time, with sundry hints as to posthumous proofs of regard, Sir Liar trembled at the idea of my millstone ever being lightened, and the charming George, or Gorge as we used to call him, also

began to quake for any diminution of his own legacy which he has been hunting so long and indefatigably. However, to return to the Chevalier d'Industrie, the noblest part of whose conduct remains to be told. When I found his lies so barefaced and contradictory I treated them with the silent contempt they deserved, never answering his last five letters, though he ends them with the most abject supplications for me to write to and forgive him, adding, "Je suis sur le banc de la torture jusque votre résponse": but I merely got my Dr.—Dr. Price—to write to him at the end of four months begging that he would at least make Mr. Stiff pay me for my second tale, which he had published in the teeth of my prohibition. To each of Dr. Price's three letters the veracious Chevalier replied the money should be sent in a day or two. Finding it did not arrive at the end of eight months, I set my lawyer to get it, when the charming Mr. Stiff—furious at thus being compelled to pay—cheats me out of £21 by counting the words contained in my second tale (which he stipulated should be shorter than the first—I to be paid the same) and sends me £9!!

Finale!

At Xmas I write as usual to Lady Hotham to wish her a Merry Xmas, and receive in return the most furious and impertinent letter from her saying, the *dear* Chevalier, the best and only friend I ever had, had told her of my base ingratitude to him after his indefatigable efforts to serve me (!), getting me an engagement to write for some journal (! !), and even the *walk* (!) to Fulham was not omitted; but that as a man could not fight a woman, he had adopted the only plan—that of treating me with contempt and not answering my letters ! ! ! So much for the Plastron. Then came the *real* cause of this outbreak— "Yes, Lady Lytton, the Chevalier read out at my table your wit about my having a cast-iron constitution and an iced cucumber heart, which caused a great laugh at your expense" (J'en doute). I replied I had not meant it for wit, but for a melancholy truth, and as the Chevalier had boasted so much of the *great* services he had rendered me, I must for the first time tell her of the little ones I had done him. I thought publicly reading confidential letters and repeating private conversations a most dastardly

and unwarrantable proceeding, and if every one adopted the same plan I should like to know how long Society would hold together or how many persons would continue to visit at her house? But as the "dear Chevalier" had set the example I would so far follow it as to send her a few of his letters to me and also his letters to Dr. Price, which at all events would refute the accusation of my base ingratitude and the silent contempt with which the Chevalier had treated my letters. To this line of refutation—especially as it included a note from Dr. Price to me saying that after the Chevalier's shameful conduct to me he thought I was quite right not to trust myself to write to him and that he would do so—she writes me back word: "Really, Lady Lytton, I have neither time nor spirits to read all these letters, and I don't want to hear the other side as nothing can alter my good opinion of the Chevalier; but notwithstanding my *cast-iron constitution* I have always the same soft, forgiving heart." It is she that has. . . . Forgive my boring you with this long rigmarole, but I am tired of being vilified, and as I introduced you to Lady Hotham and thought you might meet this little viper there this summer, on her return from Brighton, I wished you to

know the truth ; but don't suppose I want you to let them know that you know it or to *compromise* you in any one way.

Ever yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

[This rather trivial, prolix letter has been given at length, as it illustrates very fully the foibles in the writer's character, as well as her generous attributes. Here is demonstrated that injudicious freedom of speech which lost her many a friend and that obsession by a grievance (with attendant redundancy of detail) which wearied out many more. It was these traits, in part, which contributed to the shipwreck of her marriage and fed the furnace of hate wherein she immolated her husband's reputation after the separation.]

SECOND EDITION.

You will be frightened at seeing two missives from me, but in my *big* letter I forgot to enclose Mme. Bertini's letter, which I herewith send. *I* also admire Job's forbearance in not setting his dogs at his friends, but do not attribute this to

his *patience* as you do, but to the same motive which made old Lady Cork* exclaim, when her wretch of a parrot bit a piece out of poor Lady Darlington's foot, "Poor dear bird, I hope it won't disagree with it"!! After all, 'Job's trials were limited, having them I suppose by the job (oh!), and at all events his grumbling was *un*-limited, which must have been a great relief to him; but in *Moral* England, however sorely one may be afflicted, however a fifty-juggernaut power of immolation may go over one, one is not even allowed to complain—evil-doers in our highly moral Society being always held sacred, tandis que in immoral France ils seraient sacrés! I quite agree with you that the Orgies etched by poor D'Orsay, *wretched* by Lady B., and lithographed by the long Lane that has no turning (like the one I've got into!) fera fortune.

Encore adieu. Votre bien devouée,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

* The Hon. Mary Monckton, daughter of the first Viscount Galway, married in 1786, the seventh Earl of Cork, and died 1840. With Elizabeth Viscountess Langford she claims a moiety of being the original of Thackeray's "Lady Kew" in *The Newcomes*. In her youth she was a celebrated member of the "Bas Bleu" Coterie. See Note B, p. 311.

Lady Bulwer Lytton

LLANGOLLEN SARCOPHAGUS,

March 30, 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—Once for all, and I hope for the last time, permit me (if possible!) to arrange the curious *galimatias* you appear to have in your head about the Stanhope family, beginning sans doute with my *'amis' d'enfance*, Adam and Eve de Stanhope—as Lord Chesterfield, Temp. George II, had his great grandfather and grandmother painted and labelled.

The picture you painted of me some sixteen years ago is *not* in the possession—nor never was—of Lady Jane Seymour Stanhope, now Lady Mount Charles,* *nor of any other member of the Stanhope family living or dead.* It *was*, till some ten or twelve years ago, in the possession or rather in the charge of (for the 50th time!) the *present* Lady Harrington—Mrs. Wood's daughter—and was then taken from her. The friend to whom I *gave* it is since dead, and, as you truly observe, every one knows their own affairs best, for this simple reason, that they have some human feeling for themselves, though nobody else has any for them; and that lady's

* She became the Marchioness Conyngham in 1876.

little reptile of a husband in professing to inherit his dear, good wife's great friendship for me, behaved so villainously to me that, as I before said, having failed to get back the picture by fair means, even if I knew in what part of the world he now was, I should be very sorry to degrade myself by allowing any application to be made for it. If ever I should live to hear of his death, I will then take measures to recover that picture for the sake of those who would value it.

As for Lady Hotham's friendship, I never could value, or aspire to, what I knew her to be incapable of according to my interpretation of that obsolete virtue, and I never was—nor never will be—like her other *friends* (?), or rather toadies, a Legacy Hunter: but I liked her soi-disant love of art, her pretty garden, and her absence of English vulgar-mindedness in liking people for what they *are* and not for *who* they are or *what* they *have*; and as for her figure, it is perfectly *beautiful*, and even her extraordinary mode of dressing it can neither conceal nor mar its perfect symmetry—it is the most wonderful figure for a woman of her age I ever saw. Quant à la prudence, not having the good fortune to be either English, Swiss, or Scotch, I have *none*—

alas! no—not one particle of Number One-ativeness! And as for accepting an invitation to Paris, truly, as Napoléon said—and Marcus Antonius and Sir Robert Walpole long before him—every one has their *price* if you can but find it out—and Paris is mine. So that I greatly fear that were the Devil *in propriâ personâ* to invite me to go to Paris, I should accept, and thus "point a moral" by adorning *his tail!* One little reptile of a Frenchman's infamy (who, by the bye, has been fifty-five years in England, and married a very low, vulgar Englishwoman, so that he is well pétrie with all English vices—selfishness, meanness, hollowness, deceit, and ingratitude at their head) could never cure me of my love, admiration, and respect for the generous, chivalric, and self-sacrificing nature of the French people. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu says: "Nowhere are women treated with such contempt as in England." True; but she forgot to add, Nowhere are they so contemptible from their intense nullity and inanity and loathsome selfishness. As to my "blue ink correspondent having my entire confidence," it so happens that she is a vulgar literary correspondent whom I have never seen! But she has my whole "confidence," as all others

have it; for as bitter experience prevents my having confidence in *any* one, I tell the infamies I meet with to *every* one; not being able to afford to pay the Town Crier for disseminating them, therefore my communications are worse than inadvertent indiscretions—they are premeditated ones!

What convinces me that that little animalcule of a Chevalier was a tool of Sir Liar's is that when he was *imploring* my forgiveness at such an abject rate, and wanting to assure me that he and that Stiff were pure as unsunned snow about that abuse of me in *The Weekly Times*, I said: "Very well; if such is the case, I will *test* Mr. Stiff's sincerity. Let him every week in *The London Journal* put extracts from *Behind the Scenes*, as he does from Thackeray's *Newcomes*, and then I will believe in his and your innocence as to that abuse in *The Weekly Times*." The disgusting little reptile wrote me the most *solemn assurances* for nine weeks—all of which I have got—that these extracts should appear *each succeeding* week, which they never did, but in lieu of them *puffs* of Sir Liar, and citations from his plagiaries and humbug speeches; and after such repeated proofs of this little Chevalier being a

barefaced and black-hearted Judas it was that I ceased to reply to his disgusting blarneying letters: his *noble* revenge you know.

Miss Ryves has written to me bemoaning her hard fate of not being in London to see your collection of Chef-d'œuvres in May, and I would pity her the more, only I can spare no pity from myself on this occasion. She wants my opinion on Madden's Literary Lies. I told her that the subject was too disgusting to me to go over it again, but, if she liked, she might write to you, and ask you to lend her my letter to you on the subject if you had not burnt it. Luckily for you, but unluckily for me, here is the greatest bore in the Principality arrived for a visitation, so I must end. Mr. Beckford, in his Travels, makes mention of a Brazilian Bore at Cintra who—as is customary among the species—in pertinaciously dodging round the room after him, had two chairs killed under him! I have not even *this* chance of escape, all the chairs here being solid, old-fashioned pondrosities, which look as if they had been made either out of the bones of one of the black elephants at the Caucasus or those of Dr. Samuel Johnson.

Adieu, encore vous souhaitant un véritable triomphe pour le mois de Mai,

Votre bien dévouée,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

LLANGOLLEN SARCOPHAGUS,

April 12, 1855.

I can well understand, dear Mr. Chalon, the melancholy pleasure and the natural pride you must feel in again seeing so many of your poor brother's Chef-d'œuvres.* As for the inane queries touching the artist, nothing you could tell me of *that* sort would or could astonish me—les gens d'esprit en Angleterre sont en effet bien et grandiosement bête, and have not even as much heart as can be made out of brains, which was the quantum that Fontenelle's apologists allotted to him. It is also a work of supererogation to tell me of the hoggish indifference of Englishmen touching the misery of others, or of the egoism *à la glace of British Females*—qui le sait mieux que moi? But I *cannot* agree to what

* John Chalon had died the previous year, and this Exhibition of his and his brother's works in 1855 did not, as already mentioned, meet with the appreciation it merited from press and public.

you say about Paris and Frenchmen. I know I have passed many months and years in Paris, and never heard Frenchmen say anything that could make a modest woman blush; and this I *do* know, that if a Frenchman *does* presume to sigh out any nonsense about a passion malheureuse et eternelle—which generally lasts about three months!—and he finds that a woman is neither a Blessington nor a Prude he has a respect for her, and becomes sincerely, unselfishly, and devotedly her friend. As I once told the poor Duc d'Orléans, Albert Durer notes in his journal: "Aujourd'hui j'ai acheté six petites passions pour six sous"—eh bien *moi*, je ne donnerai pas autant pour toutes les grandes passions que les hommes ont juré! But if your brute of an Englishman is repulsed, when under the guise of friendship he springs up—like a snake in the grass—at last as a lover, he becomes a vulgar and implacable enemy.

À propos revenons à nos ânes, really I am getting seriously alarmed about you, for do you know Campden House was once a Young Ladies School and once a Lunatic Asylum! so that by infection you are menaced with *imbecility* on the one hand and *insanity* on the other! And it is evident you

have gone the first stage of the latter by the extraordinary monomania you seem to have got into your head (and which there is no getting out) about the Stanhope family! Voyons encore les cartes une fois. The *present* Lord Harrington, the husband of Mrs. Wood's daughter, from whom he never ran away, is *not* a "little reptile" but a *great* ass, being one of the tallest men that ever was seen. He is brother to the late Lord Harrington, who married Miss Foote, the çi-devant Lord Petersham that was—Lady Jane Seymour's father; and both he and the present Lord were duly and legitimately the sons of old Lord and Lady Harrington, who used to live in the Stable Yard, St. James's, in George and William the Fourth's time, and were also the parents of the present Duchesses of Bedford and Leinster. *No member of the Stanhope* family ever ran away with any picture of me. The one you painted of me when I went last abroad I left with the present Lord and Lady Harrington to *take care of for me*, having no house of my own to leave it in. While I *was* abroad I made it a present (as I have so often told you!) to a very dear friend of mine, who sent for it and took it away from them. When she died, poor dear

soul, her worthless little reptile of a husband came abroad. I pitied him from my heart, as he affected (as well he might) to be in such deep affliction for one of the best women that ever lived, and who on her death-bed begged him never to lose an opportunity of serving me. Having received a great deal of hospitality from them, I showed him, in what I foolishly imagined his grief, all the attention and kindness I could. This went on for about a year, when I found Sir Liar thought fit to get me talked about with this little ugly country-cobbler-looking wretch. Thereupon I, of course, said I could not allow him to visit me any more, whereupon his pretended friendship ended in a violent declaration, which so disgusted and outraged me (under the circumstances) that I forbid him my house, when he behaved in the most dastardly, bullying, and ungentlemanlike manner, refusing to return to me the picture I had given his wife, and becoming from that date my bitter and implacable enemy. I don't now, as I before told you, even know where he is, which could not be the case if he were one of the Stanhope family: and now I hope you will be satisfied to let this, to me very disagreeable, subject drop.

I am glad you have got fine weather at last, but verily you keep it all to yourself. I certainly would have sent you some violets had there been one to send; the first that have appeared here were the few little white grave-blossom-looking things brought me by some village children this morning, which I send you. I have been thinking, would you like that beautiful *Launch of the Homeward Bound*, that you so generously gave me, for your Exhibition? If so, I would give you a note to the man in whose charge—with all my Sévres, Dresden, China, and Household Linen—it was left, *i.e.*, Browne of 48 Sloane Street, the china and curiosity shop, though at this moment I am under the pleasant suspense of not knowing whether all my things are seized or not, as this Browne, my lawyer Mr. Hodgson wrote me word last week, has become a bankrupt, and had the dishonesty never to write and give me notice of the event; and I am still in all the delights of incertitude till I hear again from Mr. Hodgson, which I suppose will not be before Saturday, as on Friday he goes to Herries and Farquhar to get me my parish allowance, from which dear Sir Liar screws out the double income-tax! Sincerely do I wish that every "British Female" who is so horrified at my

presuming to speak as I do of him may have a similar husband, father, brother, and son—just to see how *they* would like it.

I only wish that violets were as plentiful as my worries of every kind, and I could not fail to supply you with them—I mean the violets, not the worries. My swindler of a publisher who cheated me (by his own shewing) out of about £275—but out of a great deal more in reality—is, with the exception of Sir Liar, the most barefaced liar and cheat—even for a publisher—I ever heard of. He swore to me last June, and to Mr. Hyde, another lawyer of mine, that *Behind the Scenes* was out of print, and that he had not a single copy left, and as he had cheated me so abominably I forbade him peremptorily to attempt to issue another edition, when lo! some one (I don't know who, nor can I recognise the writing) sends me *The Athenæum* last week with a long list of Skeet's forthcoming works in flaring type, and among them another edition of *Behind the Scenes* . . . Mr. Hyde really ought to prosecute the fellow for such unwarrantably fraudulent and impertinent conduct, but of course I shall get no redress, as ever since I came into the world all laws, human and divine, have with impunity been

either violated or reversed to injure me, and no doubt will continue to be so till I go out of it, which every day I am more and more anxious to do. As for you, I forgive all your impertinences, for strong language goes for nothing in such *weak* ink! Cannot you ask for ink as black as a literary man's heart, and with an equal quantity of gall in it, which is the real secret of the blackness. Let me know directly if you would like *The Launch of the Homeward Bound*, and only recollect you were good enough to write on it that you had given it to me, and *that* neither you nor Pecksniff might like to be made public.

If you would like any *Frost* I can send you some as we have plenty every night. As people talk of Welsh mutton I would send you some, only that the mutton here is *really* uneatable, which is perhaps lucky for me, or I might become more *moutonnière* than ever!

Adieu. T. A. V.

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

April 23, 1855.

Thank you very much for your intelligence about Browne. I am indeed delighted to hear that my beautiful *Launch* is safe, as I have *only*

been five weeks imploring Mr. Hodgson to let me know that same, or even the worst, but in vain! Had I been let to have my own way, which I never am, even in a selection of misfortunes, poor Browne would have been paid long ago: as for his Brighton letters, I never got them. But as to my worries, if the Harvest was only always half as abundant, what a land of plenty this would be. My old do-nothing trustee, Sir Thomas Cullum* (that horrid Mrs. Milner Gibson's father), died the other day, and now there is a hitch and delay about the payment of my parish allowance till another can be appointed, and I am afraid Mr. Hyde, who is generally an electric telegraph, has taken to creep in Mr. Hodgson's style by the terrible suspense he is keeping me in, which is doubly distressing just now, as I wanted to get away to some kind, old, long-tried friends in Somersetshire: but *pray* don't breathe a word of my intention of leaving this horrid place to Lady Hotham or any one, as I want, if possible, to escape the ceaseless persecutions of my relentless fiend by keeping my whereabouts secret; and, indeed, if my beggarly

* The Rev. Sir Thomas Gery Cullum, of Hardwick, eighth and last baronet.

parish allowance does not come soon I shall not be able to leave this for another three or four months.

If you could see the *real* architectural nightmare of the "Cottage Horny,"* it is even uglier than the lithograph, being patched together with heavy heterogeneous pieces of old black oak carving, of which the late Duchess of St. Albans sent the old ladies a cart-load, so that it looks for all the world like those concentrated indigestions of unwieldy and elaborate gingerbread that one sees at a Dutch Fair.

I am glad you had such a good view of Génie et Eugénie—I mean the Emperor and Empress; but her great beauty is her skin and figure, the first being like parian marble and the latter moulded as if by Praxiteles: what a contrast to *our* little *flamme de bouche* looking queen! The Capilotade à la lettre that I send you this time I have wrapped up in a charming portrait of the greatest scamp in the Principality, and being such, I suppose, was the reason that he always wore a bull's horn round his neck, doubtless as a practical

* Plâs Newydd, the home of "The Ladies of Llangollen" (Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby).

illustration of the promise that "The horn of the righteous shall be exalted"!*

Whoever thought of collecting the Portraits of the Bonaparte family (et sur tout de la Reine Hortense) at the Guildhall? It was a very nice and amiable idea, and much more French than English.

Mr. Tib, with hims Koh-i-noor eyes, desires mille baise-pattes to Miss Mizzy. I am up to my eyes in business and bother of every kind, so again thanking you very sincerely for having been so kind as to take the trouble of going to Browne's,

Believe me in haste, dear Mr. Chalon,
Ever truly yours,
ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

LLANGOLLEN SARCOPHAGUS,
April 25, 1855.

A thousand thanks, dear Mr. Chalon, for your agreeable letter and the delicious flowers, which revived on being put into tepid water and became quite fresh and sweet: and truly it is a cause for gratitude to get anything sweet and innocent in

* It was a portrait of Richard Robert Jones, alias Dic Aberdaron, "the celebrated Cambrian linguist."

the midst of so much bitterness, blackness, and baseness. À propos de bottes, I am charmed with your old aunt's boot and hat, and in common with the rest of the world owe the good old lady a debt of gratitude for having fostered your and your poor brother's artistic genius. Have you no portrait of her? But of course you have. . . .

I am still in all the agonies of suspense, or rather of despair, for not yet having had one line from either of those dreadful lawyers touching my parish allowance, here I must pine out my miserable existence for another three or four months instead of joining my kind friends as I had anxiously hoped to do. However, I have always the satisfaction of being furnished with fresh matter for my black letter edition of human nature.* . . . But so be it, I have still my poor Tib with hims big bootiful darling honest eyes—there is neither deceit, treachery, nor ingratitude about him.

Instead of a diamond watch and chain our little Brummagem queen would have given a shilling pinchbeck one and ditto chain, for I saw the disgraceful fifteen-shilling pins—such as a

* There follows a long recount of the Chevalier de Birard's iniquities.

groom might stick in his shirt—that she gave her aunt's chamberlains and dames d'honneur when she went to Brussels and Coburg. . . .

No, decidedly I am *not* a prudent person, for though I never *begin* by attacking or speaking disparagingly of any one, as I find most other, even very prudent, people do—like the despicable little Chevalier for instance—yet when I have been either grossly insulted or aggrieved, as often happens to a person in my most cruel and almost unparalleled position, I have a vulgar habit of telling *the exact truth* and expressing myself both plainly and strongly; and although Socrates's advice to live with one's best friends as if they were one day to be one's enemies is admirable as to *prudence*, yet the acting upon it would render existence (for of *Life* I know nothing) even a more bitterly nauseous chose than it already is. . . .

Yours sincerely,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

May 6, 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—You will think I am making a perfect St. Paul of you, giving you the

care of all the churches,* which at all events is very disinterested of me, as if my worries continue much longer, I shall soon be past praying for. I have every prospect of being kept here God knows how long, as you will see by the enclosed letter from Mr. Hyde, which I hope won't shock you too much, as you will perceive that he has (though a lawyer and therefore knowing that every word of his letter would be actionable if it were not much *too* true to be noticed) the same "coarse, vulgar habit" of calling certain persons and things by their *right names* that I have. . . .

De grâce donnez moi des nouvelles de vos triomphes d'exposition? A friend of mine writes me word that Prince Albert looked quite delighted at sitting beside that beautiful Empress instead of his own dumpy, idiotic looking frau. I wrote her back word no doubt he *was* delighted at this change for his sovereign, à qui, si cela se pourra, il eut été tout à fait aussi content de donner le change! I hope you don't expect any flowers because this is called "the merry month of May," as I beg to tell you—all on account of

* There is a view of Wrexham Church on the notepaper of this letter.

LLANGOLLEN CHURCH & RIVER DEE.

Saturday April 28th 1855

Now Father you will Dear Mr Shadow
and should be heard shipped off for home
first thing on Monday but at Llangollen, as I do
not want to encourage, or discourage you in
any way - but let your heart be set into any
plan in Friendship, or elsewhere as you
wish. No decidedly I am not a prudent person

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM LADY BULWER LYTTON, SHOWING THE HOTEL SHE LIVED IN AT LLANGOLLEN

the War!—*we* have ice two inches thick, while the mountains, as Carlyle would say, look like geographical *flunkeys or the like* powdered with snow. Poor Sir Henry Bishop! I am so sorry for him: how came he to be in such distress? for a few years ago he was a very rich man.

Addio. In great haste, yours sincerely,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

PHILLIPS'S HOTEL,
LLANGOLLEN,
May 27, 1855.

Very many thanks, dear Mr. Chalon, for your most kind and considerate thought of sending an admission to view your Chef-d'œuvres to my dear good Mr. Hyde; next to having the great pleasure and privilege of doing so *myself*, nothing could afford me greater gratification. . . . The moment that cowardly wretch, Sir Liar, got Mr. Hyde's missive he paid my parish allowance the next day, but Mr. Hyde said in his last letter to me, three days ago, "I have not done with the wretches yet," and Mr. Hyde having now got all the documents and proofs of his infamous spies, which have been traced by a magistrate, I have no doubt he will make the dastard tremble in his

ugly, skin. I hope to leave this the 12th of June, and will let you know my whereabouts, but mind *c'est pour vous seul* on account of Sir Liar's organised system of espionage and conspiracy *en permanence*. . . .

Mille remercîments for your kind suggestion about Swansea, which by your account seems to be a sort of Italy improvisée: I should indeed be glad to get to that or any other sea out of my sea of troubles! But of that I can see no chance, being one of those inveterate *manque tout*, who with enough to kill twenty people cannot even manage to die. I think you *would* pity me if you knew the process of slow torture that Fiend—for *man* he is not—has subjected me to ever since I have been in this living tomb; however, it is God's Will or it could not be: therefore as *His* Will I *must* bear it, though I do think *no* one was ever *so* severely, so universally, and so *long* tried, without intermission, as I have been. As for Job, he was, compared to me, a pampered sybarite, for in the whole of the Devil's *répertoire* of *that* day there was no Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, for verily if there had been, his Satanic Majesty might in point of wickedness have hid his diminished head, to say nothing of his hoofs,

and sold off all his fire and brimstone "at a tremendous sacrifice." But I have no right to bore you with all this, so encore adieu. . . .

Yours sincerely,

R. B. L.,

MOGLIE DI DIAVOLO!

Lady Bulwer Lytton made a hasty departure from Llangollen. For some time past she had thought efforts were being made by her enemies to poison her, or to kidnap and immure her in an asylum. Much of this belief was probably delusion, but in the unhappy state of her mind it was a very real delusion, and she accordingly removed, with great secrecy, to Taunton, in Somersetshire, from where she wrote her next letter, in June 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I don't know if I ever told you that when I made my escape from Llangollen and came here, Sir Edward was perfectly rabid at his and his bloodhounds having lost my track. So well had I managed it, that all the wretches there thought I was gone to London,

as I had all my luggage forwarded to a friend in Hyde Park Terrace, and sent on here after, so that when my parish allowance became due he and Loaden * thought themselves *very* clever in saying they would not pay it till they had a clergyman's certificate of the place I was in and of my existence! My dear good old lion, Hyde, said he should have a better proof of my existence than *that*, as he, Hyde, would accompany me to Knebworth and see me properly installed there, which, of course, brought the reptile instantly to his senses; but as I was determined *not* to endure this infamy every time, and as poor Mr. Hodgson, though an excellent man, is a sort of legal Admiral Dundas, I determined to take the matter in hand myself, more especially as the spies were reappearing on the horizon.

About a week before my last parish allowance became due, a creature calling herself Miss Henna (why not Henbane at once?) wrote to request an interview with me—that is the way they generally begin; but by her coming in the dusk of the evening, in a pouring rain, and refusing to say what her business was, and being so very urgent to see me, *only* to see me, Mrs.

* Bulwer Lytton's agent.

Clarke * told her, without mincing the matter, that she firmly believed her to be one of Sir E.'s spies and that therefore she might go back and tell him, after being hunted to death by his infamous emissaries, I saw *no one* not especially recommended to me, but that no doubt he would be delighted to hear that I had not been so well for years, and was going abroad in a day or two. "Miss Henna" then, by way of establishing her respectability, said she was a governess. "Oh! very likely," said Mrs. Clarke; "I understand most of that vile man's mistresses are, and they afterwards fill the equally honourable office of his spies. Pray, where are you staying in Taunton?" She then got very red, stammered very much, and named some doctor living near Trinity Church (two miles from this). "Oh! indeed," said Mrs. Clarke, "but it happens rather unfortunately that there is *no* doctor of law, physic, or divinity of *that* name in Taunton, so the sooner you return to your employer the better." Mrs. Clarke sent a policeman to watch her, and she decamped by the next London train, and Mr. Oakly, the governor of the jail, made every inquiry, and no one of the name of "Henna," nor

* The landlady at Taunton.

answering her description, was known at the post office or in the town. *

GILES'S CASTLE HOTEL,
TAUNTON, SOMERSETSHIRE,
June 19, 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I have not the least doubt that your Exhibition is both remarkable and first-rate. I had a letter from Mr. Hyde a few days ago begging of me again to thank you for the ticket of admission you so kindly sent him : he said he knew they would see *some* Chef-d'œuvres, but he had no idea they should see so many, it is such a magnificent collection.

I arrived here yesterday week, and feel in Heaven to be out of that horrid hole and once more among kind friends who pet me from morning to night. My present locale is very agreeable, this being the original old Castle of 1296 (castellated), with a beautiful gateway, and by moonlight really a beautiful pile of building. My landlady, instead of being an ugly old hyæna

* This letter was printed in *Life of Rosina, Lady Lytton*, and was apparently the only one in the long series addressed to A. E. Chalon that Miss Devey, the author of the book, ever saw. The original of this letter is not with the rest of the correspondence.

like my last, is a pretty, young, and very obliging person, and has actually refurnished my rooms for me, which are very pleasant—looking out over the Castle Green; and there is also a beautiful Park of Lord Wilton's within ten minutes' walk, qui fait les délices de Monsieur Tib. For a country town, this is a much larger place, with infinitely finer shops, than I should have supposed, and the 15th Hussars being now quartered here enlivens it considerably; but alas! the rain is like marriage, inasmuch as that there is no end to it, and although the almanack calls it the 19th June, I have a Xmas fire which is not a coal too warm. Here are some friends who have called to take me to return some visits, and as I cannot keep their horses in the rain—addio.

Ever, dear Mr. Chalon, sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

CASTLE HOTEL,

June 24, 1855.

I am indeed grieved to hear, dear Mr. Chalon, that the Infernal Machine has been at work against you,* but I am never *surprised* at any

* An allusion, no doubt, to press criticisms of the Exhibition of the Chalons' works.

amount of infamy or *treachery* its propellers may perpetrate. Take care that that mean reptile Pecksniff's* *profession* of good will is not the *primo mobile* of all this real ill will, for the whole of that rascally Press Gang are more or less Januses or Judases. I remember years ago that ne plus ultra of clever blackguards, Dr. Maginn, shewing me the most smashing articles he had written for *The Standard* against that vile Mrs. Norton upon the Melbourne *crim. con.* affair,† and *another* for *The Globe* written with the *same* pen, and before the ink of the *smasher* was dry, *proving* her to be an angel of light and injured innocence—and injured *in no sense* she certainly was, so far as this world goes, where brazen vice in man or woman is *the* passport to all earthly success: but infamy which plays so great a rôle —more especially in England—has only two

* S. C. Hall, as owner of *The Art Journal.*

† Caroline Sheridan, wife of George Norton (younger brother of Lord Grantley), had much influence with Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister. Although he had accepted various favours from his wife's friend, Norton claimed £10,000 damages from Melbourne, who, however, secured a successful verdict at the famous trial, in 1836, for *crim. con.* Mrs. Norton, of course, was to a great extent the model for Meredith's "Diana of the Crossways."

agents, force and hypocrisy, and only two limits, courage and independence, but alas! *where* is the latter combination to be found except in homeopathic globules in a very small minority?

You say you think your influential friend *might* have exerted himself before: ah! my dear sir, if *friends* (?), influential or otherwise, ever *did* exert themselves—instead of bearing all our insults, injustices, and outrages with the most stoical philosophy, the most Christian forgiveness, and the most passive endurance—depend upon it, enmity would soon be extinct, for it would have no *power* whereon to exist. Enemies declare war, but luke-warm friends it is who *arm* them for the fray and ensure them the victory by leaving them *champ libre*. I shall be very glad to see the article in *The Court Journal* or any other that does you justice. I have such a sovereign contempt for the Press that I never see any paper but *The Times*, and only that on account of its leading articles and the fearless and masterly manner it speaks out on the subject of all abuses save ONE. But then the man is not yet born—more especially the Englishman—who will interest himself about that one.

I cannot think what takes old Lady Hotham

annually to the Continent, but verily believe it is to screw in a garret abroad to avoid dinner-giving in London and the corkscrewing that entails.

I continue to be delighted with my new abode, and it would be difficult not to be, so surrounded with kindness and prévenances as I am. My landlady anticipates every wish I have in an almost lover-like way, and supplies me daily with whole parterres of the most lovely flowers, to which I shall nevertheless be delighted to introduce your promised rose.

Though Solomon said there was nothing new under the sun, here is a strange thing and, to me, one that is perfectly new. Mr. Oakly, the governor, was shewing me over the Jail the other day, and in pointing out the new wing that had been built for the women's ward said that last year, when the workmen were digging for the foundation they came upon a perfect *forest* of full-grown oaks; the leaves and acorns on the trees, but they as well as the trunks perfectly black, and that that very handsome carved dining table I had admired in his dining-room had been made out of one of them. A *learned* geologist lecturing on this extraordinary discovery roundly asserted that this subterranean forest had been

planted by the acorns given in great profusion to the Bishop of Winchester's pigs in Harry the Eighth's time! This is what you may call going the *whole animal* in science, and as I have not a fellow marvel to match it, I must conclude with the anything but new assurance that I am, dear Mr. Chalon,

Yours very sincerely,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

CASTLE HOTEL,

July 9, 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I have been waiting avec tant soit peu d'impatience for the promised article in *The Court Journal* and the sybarite sandwiches you promised me in the shape of rose leaves. I hope my story of the subterranean forest did not amaze you with an oblivion of all other things as the legends of "The Erl King" do the German children.

Miss Ryves writes me word that she has just been at a series of Bridal *Festas* at Hermitage —my *brilliant* (!) cousin Lord Massy's, who has just got a young and very pretty wife*—

* Hugh, fifth Lord Massy, of Hermitage, Co. Limerick, married, in 1855, Isabella, daughter of George More Nisbet, of Cairnhill, Co. Lanark.

and that young Lady M.'s sister-in-law, Lady Agnes Nisbet (she was a daughter of Lord Stair's) has given her such a glowing and tantalising description of the Chalon Exhibition, that it makes her *doubly* regret not being able to have an equal pleasure, "for which," she adds, "I would gladly pay 10s. to make up the deficit of Lady Hotham's *one*—such is what *she* would call my imprudence!" I tell you this to show you that *all* the world is not Press-ridden into blindness and bad taste.

I continue to be what donkeys rarely are —in clover. Such kind friends, and it *is* as good an échappé of Elysium as one can hope for on this side of the Styx to have every wish anticipated, and be loved and cared for from morning to night; and then such a pearl of a landlady, such a profusion of beautiful fresh flowers every morning, and *such* strawberries (they must have come from Brobdingnag!) and Devonshire cream for breakfast. I wish you and Mizzy were here to share them. Tib sends an effigy of our kennel to show Mizzy she was wrong to turn up her nose at him. Pray let me hear that both you and the Gallery are going on as well and

prosperously as is the sincere wish of, dear Mr. Chalon,

Yours very truly,
ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.
Per mi disgrazzia.

August 6, 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I am glad, for your own sake, that it was not *your* house that was polluted by *The Guilt*, as not only "who can touch pitch without being defiled?" but also nothing can pitch touch that it does not defile; and moreover I have a strong faith in the proverb of "Tell me your company and I'll tell you who you are." . . . I did not on second thoughts intend sending you the accompanying letters, recollecting in time my English proprieties, which always inculcate that when persons have no earthly interest in you or your affairs, you have no right to bore them with them; but on the other hand my English selfishness predominates, and having no interests to *ménager* or ends to gain, and heartily despising the whole tissue of infamies . . . , I am determined to make the whole thing public with a vengeance. As for poor timid Mr. Hodgson, it is such cowardice

from first to last which has wrecked me, and when he like a goose wrote me word that I'd have to give my address, I replied as Sir Cloudsley Shovel did when he was Governor of the Castle here in the Civil Wars and the Parliamentarians wanted by starving him out to make him raise the siege —"I'll eat my boots first!" And accordingly the *moment* that vile wretch Loaden got Mr. Hyde's letter, the cowardly wretches instantly paid the money at twelve o'clock that night, and that is the only way to deal with such ineffable blackguards as Sir Liar Coward Bulwer Lytton and "That sublime of rascals his attorney," who little dream of the moral earthquake that awaits them. But you must not suppose à l'anglais that Mr. Hyde writes these letters *because* he's paid for them and is therefore obliged to do so, for, for the fifteen years he has transacted my business, he has never received or would accept a shilling from me; and when first I consulted him (though *then* alas! it was too late, for all the mischief had been done by my ass of a cousin). . . . I believe he thought me quite as *violent*, *unreasonable*, *imprudent*, and *exaggerated* in my indignation as you do—till proof came under his own eyes so damning of that Fiend's incredible villainy and fabulous black-

guardism, that *now* I think he even goes beyond me in his sovereign contempt for and disgust at him. Poor, good Mr. Hyde! his illness is not only a serious loss but a sincere grief to me, though now, thank God, he is much better. I have a most darling story to tell you of my little Tibby's saving a kitten's life, but must put it off till I write again, so believe me in haste, dear Mr. Chalon,

Yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

August 8, 1855.

Many thanks, dear Mr. Chalon, for letting me see the enclosed. I am glad that The Morning Pap in its long career of falsehood and inanity has at length written some sentences of truth and sense. I cannot agree with you that *age per se* is respectable, though I do think it should always be respected—that is spared—by "station"! Of course you mean *wealth*, for it so happens that Pie-assiette * is three years older than Lady Hotham and has *quite* as good blood in his veins, though one would never suppose so by his actions: yet *because* he is poor you have no such

* The Chevalier de Birard.

wondrous respect for *his* age or tenderness for *his* vices! The Queen is unquestionably a person of "station," which does not, however, prevent her being a most worthless, contemptible, insignificant person. However, chacun à son goût, and there can be no doubt that the safe Swiss plan of worshipping the powers that be is the most prudent with regard to this world. I must end in haste not to keep "a person of station!"—that is one infinitely *richer* than myself—waiting, one who has come to take me out to drive, so believe me by electric telegraph,

Truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON,

who in ten minutes will be a person of station as she is going to the railway station!

September 15, 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—Your letter just received is the first intelligence I have had of the poem you mention; but to tell you the truth, I take no interest in Poetry since I have found what unnatural brutes poets can be. I understand . . . 's legitimate son is a poet, and by all accounts as great a profligate and hypocrite as his father; one thing is at all events certain,

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON
From the portrait by A. E. Chalon, R.A.

that he is quite as unfeeling and unnatural, which I suppose are the credentials necessary to be called by the world extremely amiable, I hate Classical Poetry, and though Clytemnestra fully deserved her fate, at all events she had the satisfaction (and the virtue!) to murder her husband first, which would have been more praiseworthy if he had not been Agamemnon. However, like all good people, those Beldame Fates, of course, compelled him to pay the tax of his worth.

Are you not much flattered and elated that the Clique have generously allowed *your* portrait of Messalina Blessington to appear to the second edition of her *Life*? I congratulate you upon their dawning patronage!* The weather is so delight-

* The picture in question by Chalon, showing Lady Blessington in her opera box, is reproduced opposite. After the engraving of this portrait, Lady Blessington's beau cavalier, Count D'Orsay, wrote solicitously to the artist:

"MON CHER M. CHALON,

"Vous me rendrez grand service si vous voulez avoir l'obligeance de *recoller* le portrait de Lady Blessington: vous remarquerez que MM. les graveurs l'ont horriblement *chiffonné*, et je n'ose le confier à personne. Ayez aussi la bonté de faire *redorer* la cadre pour moi.

"Vous voyez que je compte beaucoup sur votre amabilité pour vous donner tout cet embarras.

"Votre tout devoué,
"A. D'ORSAY."

ful that I think you will still enjoy the Isle of Wight. I am going to Sweden with some friends in their yacht, and am enchanted to get out of England, the land of vice, cant, falsehood, treachery, and every other rascality.

Wishing you a pleasant tour, believe me, dear Mr. Chalon,

Yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

December 14, 1855.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—L'homme propose (at least sometimes when he is not wanted to do so) et le Dieu dispose—sans doute toujours pour le mieux, and so my trip to Sweden was knocked on the head by a severe fit of illness—from which I am still weak—and this journey put off till next year. Next year!—when perhaps I may have gone farther, though without I trust faring worse. Many thanks pour les deux portraits *non* charmants. *I* can vouch for the likeness of that of "Maria, my love," Mrs. Pecksniff; and for the other, all I can say is, that if her voice was only half as much *in the air* as her nose is, her singing must have been perfection.

I suppose you have heard of poor Lady Hotham's

death? A friend wrote me word from Brighton that she had been talking with her on the cliff three days before, when she was as well as ever she was: it was my old foe bronchitis that she died of, for that said bronchitis is a regular Cossack for carrying off old women, so it is to be hoped it will not always disdain me. Doubtless Pie-assiette is now, après avoir si longtemps croquer le marmot, reaping the *golden* harvest of his treachery, ingratitude, and blackguardism, but I have not yet heard any particulars touching her behests.

This being a *penal* settlement I can only give you extracts from the Jail and Gibbet Gazette. The horrible case of that Tutton for poisoning his father was tried here the other day, and I went with a large party to hear the speech for the prosecution, the barrister being a friend of ours. Nothing could be stronger than the evidence against him, and one of his sisters owned *after* the trial that she had *seen* him secrete the arsenic paper in his bosom; but the shrieks of the poor wretched mother and sisters caused them to be taken out of court and so prevented their being cross-examined, for they would not give evidence against him. His countenance alone might have hung him without judge or jury, for a more

villainous one—with a solitary exception—I never saw, but he was acquitted and let loose to continue his successful career of crime. The Judge (Baron Parke) was furious and surprised beyond measure at this verdict: not so I, as I have long been convinced that to succeed in English Society one must be guilty of great vices; and to benefit by English Legislation one must commit a great crime.

A curious story this, about Miss Murray (the ci-devant Maid of Honour) returning from America a red-hot advocate for Slavery, which she calls "a charming domestic arrangement," and having written a book upon the theme, requested permission to dedicate it to the Queen, whose reply was "that she must chuse between her Book and her Place," and accordingly she has resigned. I can quite understand her crotchet from the fact of our always judging of all things from our own individual *twinges*; and she having made a comparative analysis between Slavery in America and at Buckingham Palace, gave the preference to the Nigger over the *Niggard* system—et voilà tout.

There is here the most *prévenant* of waiters, who supplies me with the most charming bouquets

—nothing less than myrtle, roses, geraniums, and heliotropes, of which I send you a few leaves, and with all the good wishes of the season, believe me, dear Mr. Chalon,

Very truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

January 17, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—Mr. Charles Hyde's office is 33, Ely Place, Holborn, London. Thank Heaven, one of his country houses is within six miles of this, which I feel as some little protection, considering the ceaseless persecution I am subjected to from *the* most ruffianly blackguard in England.

I'm very glad to hear Mme. Bertini is at Windsor—if *she* likes it and thinks it will be any service to her: I'd rather *she* than me, and I hope she may get more than three farthings a lesson and her travelling expenses deducted.*

In haste, dear Mr. Chalon,

Yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

* Madame Bertini was engaged at times in teaching the younger members of the Royal Family.

February 2, 1856.

Very many thanks to you, dear Mr. Chalon, and many more to the Author of the very clever *jeu d'esprit* which you were good enough to forward me; it has been a most agreeable relief to my dullness, and I sincerely (though alas! very disinterestedly) join in the author's regret at your absence from the Exhibition. . . . I am delighted with the manner in which he has kept the *unities* about Dickens's *manipulations* of the samples of *his* Fatherland. Quant à son élogé de cette petite ladre égoïste bécasse de Reine, c'est *si peu* merité qu'il devient satire, et à ce titre est assez de mise. I do hope that this poet is not *also* an artist, as *that* is too much in *your* style to ingross so many talents, and a shameful monopoly that we poor ignoramuses have every right to resent as a sort of personal robbery, and it is therefore very lucky pour vous autres génies à facettes that we do not harbour the savage idea that by strangling or *Palmerising* you we might obtain possession of your talents; or else you would surely find (as Mirabeau said of Necker) that you were "victims to your own ambition and martyrs to your own

success." May I ask—if not a profound secret—the *name* of the author whose piquant poem has afforded me and two or three of my friends here so much pleasure? . . .

You will be *charmed* to hear that the dear Chevalier has had his *virtue* rewarded by Lady Hotham with a legacy of £300, but as he is a *poor wretch*, in every sense of the word, I don't so much regret this as that that disgusting brute, George Beauclerk, should have succeeded in his designs and got one of £2000—a wretch who so recently figured in a police court for so villainous a crime; but being a sexagenarian legacy hunter it's satisfactory (to himself) that he should have succeeded at last. Some sixteen years ago, during the life of her first husband, he was playing precisely the same game with that old ass, Mrs. Disraeli, little dreaming that she used to show me all his letters and roar over them: but Dizzy, who had also entered the lists with him, being the cleverer rascal of the two, was in at the death and so married the lean widow, or rather her fat jointure, for *which* he proposed the *very* day poor Wyndham Lewis died, as the Coroner's Inquest were tramping up the stairs (for he died suddenly of a heart complaint). *This* I know for

a *fact* from having been in the house at the time, and Mrs. Dizzy owning—or rather *proclaiming*—the "soft impeachment" to me herself. However, it must be confessed that Dizzy has always behaved in the kindest and most *cherishing* manner to her £5000 a year, which dies with her, he no doubt seeing a terrible void in his banker's book "looming in the future!"

What I cannot forgive Lady Hotham for is the more than ingratitude—the positive dishonesty—of leaving her poor, old, life-long servants totally unprovided for. As I told poor old Davis (her butler), if I had but a home I would willingly take both him and his wife. . . . I can think of nothing better—at least truer—for poor Lady Hotham's epitaph than alas! that such soft heads should go with such hard hearts and hard cash. . . .

Croyez moi, cher M. Chalon, votre toute dévouée,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

February 8, 1856.

Mille grâces, cher M. Chalon, pour le très spirituel billet de M. Lane, in whose opinion I so cordially agree that I much prefer Lane upon

Chalon to either Chalons sur Marne or Saone! Mr. Lane says he is not an R.A., which I am surprised at, as from what I have seen from his pencil I always thought him the best sort of R.A. —to wit, a Rare Artist.* I can only repeat that you artists are most unconscionable monopolists, and deserve to be tried for Bigamy with at *least* five of the nine Muses, and have actions for *crim. con.* brought against you with the other four. . . .

And now I am going to fly in the face of the whole Royal Academy, and criticise both your *anatomy* and your *design*, for you have put a *heart* where heart there was none; it should have been a plethoric *Purse* surmounted by a Cap of Maintenance, et pour *cime the* cap and bells. I cannot agree with you as to the superior physique of that beast Beauclerk to Dizzy. Whether it is knowing what I do of the brute, but he always gives me the idea of a Brummagem Brigand as manufactured at the Surrey Theatre or Richardson's Show: whereas there is both character (I don't, of course, mean moral

* R. J. Lane, like Chalon, particularly excelled in fine pencil portraits. He lived at 3, Osnaburgh Terrace, Regent's Park.

character) and uniqueness in Dizzy's grotesque ugliness, as he is a *facsimile* of "The Black Princely Devil" in a book of Chinese superstitions, which poor Captain Marryat lent me once. Poor old Davis looked, acted, and felt more like a gentleman any day than that brute *Gorge*. My advice to Davis was to send the wretch's letter intact to Mr. Shiel.* What a pity Beauclerk could not cajole Lady Hotham into leaving him everything, and then there would be no one to blame but the Man in the Moon for the treachery to poor Davis. As for Gorge's flourish of penny trumpets about *his* character, as I told Mrs. Davis, there is only *one* man in England *could* do it justice, and that was Calcraft the Hangman. The wretch's disgusting vanity, too: he one evening, at Brighton, entertained Lady Hotham for three hours with all the women in London who had been in love with, and made set at, him; but when at last he came to the present Lady Beauchamp I could stand it no longer, so very quietly said, "Dear me, you astonish me, for I thought in marrying Lord Beauchamp she had got what *she* had always considered indispensable —*rank* and *money!*" Upon another occasion Lady

* Lady Hotham's nephew and heir.

Hotham said to me, "George Beauclerk was quite miserable the other day at having stained his lips with mulberries." "What a fool he must be," said I, "for does he not know that the King Charles *breed* always are black in the mouth." *

I am thoroughly disgusted and much disappointed at Mr. Shiel, and could I have dreamt that he would have inherited his aunt's flinty parsimony with her property I never would have urged her to leave him the latter, as I did when Gorge and the rest of the gang were doing all they could to set her against him.

I wish you were within reach of an invitation, as a young relation of mine, now on leave in London from Aldershot, has this morning sent me a perfect colony of Pâtés de foie gras and a case of Champagne. . . . I really think I shall have to quote from one of those brilliant effusions that I admire so much—the Speeches from the Throne—and say that "at present my *foreign relations* are highly satisfactory!"

Adieu, dear Mr. Chalon. T.A.V.

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

* George Beauclerk was a descendant of Charles Beauclerk, first Duke of St. Albans, son of King Charles II. and Nell Gwyn.

I am sorry to say I have mislaid Mr. Lane's note among my papers, but I will send it to you to-morrow. I only hope it has not fallen in Master Tiber's way, as he is so fond of *running down Lanes*, and I should be sorry that he, or any one else, should run down that one.

February 15, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I am really sorry you should have *twice* had the trouble of sending me your reply to M. de Caudolle; but up to the present moment I have never received the first *envoye*. From what I can glean of the nature of the *Rapport* (by your reply), I do not wonder that you should be annoyed at its short-comings with regard to the proper *Standard* of praise due to your brother's and your own Chef-d'œuvres; but I take it that it is pretty generally with critics in art as with critics in literature—that *even* when their intention is most to praise, their judgment being at fault they invariably go upon a wrong tack and select the very worst and least praise-worthy points for their panegyrics—et puisque peut on attendre de Genève? "Cette ville ladre et roide où tout est entamé, où l'on calcule toujours et ne sent jamais," as Voltaire truly said

of it; and which if it were not for the truly great Painters it has produced in no niggardly degree, deserves to be submerged in its own beautiful Lake for its intense meanness, cant, self-sufficiency, and having produced such an unprincipled wretch as Jean Jacques Rousseau, who, barring the vindictiveness and calculating villainy, was a sort of highly diluted Sir Liar. Mais consoler vous, cher M. Chalon, the higher order of genius like yours and your brother's has always an unalienable Crown, Throne, and Empire in Posterity. . . .

You need not thank me for my *confidence*: it was *no* confidence, but what I would make to the Town Crier; my miserable position not only being exceptional but unique, it must be dealt with after an exceptional and unique manner, and I assure you you would have had my free leave to have posted the last letters I sent you on the outside walls of your house. Mais je comprends that according to the practices of the un-Holy Inquisition such a correspondence might be compromising to the person in whose hands or house it was found. I am sure you would be surprised at the number of persons who not only feel for me but, more wonderful

still, have not the least scruple or prudence in expressing in the most strenuous and open-mouthed manner their utter contempt for Sir Liar, and unmitigated disgust at his unparalleled infamy. It is no matter of wonder when one can sow gold or influence that one should reap partisans: but being a beggar I confess I myself am surprised that I should enlist so many free lances. I really begin to think that I am a sort of *She* Vicomte de Letorière, for every time I settle with my landlady she entreats me not to do so if it is the least inconvenient to me, whereupon I tell her that if she can only persuade *all* the tradespeople to be content with my *custom* without my money they shall be favoured with the *former* to the most unlimited extent. . . .

The scrap of newspaper I enclose you is a paragraph I sent to *The Times* about two months ago. Was it not singularly applicable to the present crisis? * Avec mille choses de ma part et de celle de mon fils chéri Tiber à Mesdames Patapouffe et Mizzy, croyez moi, cher M. Chalon, T.A.V.,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

* The cutting relates to political movements in Russia in 1772.

Lady Bulwer Lytton

February 20, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

Had I not felt a *wish* to keep your answer to M. de Caudolle I should not have asked your permission to do so. We won't talk of "sympathy" because *that* would be toadying you, an art I never could make the least proficiency in, which proves my inveterate stupidity as I have seen so much of it. But pray never apply the word to good, honest, single-minded Mr. Hyde,* who, like all sterling characters, in loathing the rampant vice of English Society naturally despises its stagnant conventionalities, and so among the apathetically well-bred must make up his account to being found guilty of the *lèse-fadaise* of "bad taste"; but people *don't* toady beggars like me, even if they are silly enough to feel for them, more especially a lawyer who is a disgrace to his profession by working for one gratuitously!! People in general (though, thank Heaven, there *are* exceptions to this rule) toady rich old misers, male or female, that is pay their *legacy duty* to them, or sycophantise to potential infamies like Dizzy or Sir Liar, but not to poor wretches like me, who are only

* Her lawyer.

allowed to smuggle their very virtues (if they have any) through the World's High Court of Chancery *in formâ pauperis.*

You say you refrain from invectives with regard to Sir Liar because he is the best abused wretch in Europe. I wish I could think so, and I would immediately follow your magnanimous example; but, on the contrary, though all bought and paid for, I think him the most be-puffed and over-rated *vaurien* in Europe. However, I must make allowances for the difficulties of the case and remember that though by the slightest praise it would be easy to overrate such a man, no amount of vituperation *could* do justice to his infamy.

As for your courage in exhibiting the "Portrait charmant" which you call mine, besides embellishing me past recognition you made me at least thirty years younger than I am: however, being used to detraction in every way I can bear it with Christian fortitude; at all events I certainly shall not begin complaining when it extends to my age! Many thanks for letting me see Sir Charles Eastlake's letter, every word of which I am ready to endorse — if need be upon oath before a magistrate—though when I read it I could not help thinking of a certain anecdote of the Maréchal

de Villars when, upon the death of the Duc de Vendôme, he was made Governor of Provence. Whereupon the good Provençals, according to a time immemorial feudal custom, presented him with a heavy purse of gold on a golden dish; but at the same time in order to give him an idea of what he *ought* to do—at least of what was expected of him—they informed him that his predecessor on his inauguration had returned both purse and dish. "Ah!" cried the Maréchal, handing the latter to a page, and thrusting the purse into his pocket, "an extraordinary man the Duc de Vendôme, a very extraordinary man, for he has not left his equal!"

I am sorry I should have annoyed Mr. Lane, but he must make allowances for my ignorance, or perhaps there are two Lanes. If so, I may have mistaken the one for the other, for though living so much with dogs and admiring so cordially those really superior beings, still, unlike them, I have *not* the organ of locality; but is he not the artist who lithographed those things of D'Orsay's? Without being *quite* as bad as poor Catalani, who told me that after seeing Poitier in that most ridiculous burlesque, *The Sorrows of Werther*, she had actually complimented Goethe

on *his* delightful and most amusing drama! Still, I dare say I *may* be quite equal to Cardoza, the poor Spaniard, who from having been a fisherman became by a sudden freak of fortune a millionaire. Often had he seen connoisseurs at the Escurial shed tears of ecstasy over the figures of the Christ, the Virgin, and the St. Jerome in a Cardinal's hat (!) reading the Bible in Raphael's *Madonna del Pesce*: but all *he* could see in it was the *fish* that the young Tobit, led by an angel, was presenting as tribute to the divine group. Accordingly, when Cardoza went on his Travels, as all millionaires must do, and finding himself at Rome, was invited to a supper to meet the great artist, after four and twenty hours of hard study he could concoct no better compliment than, "Ah! Signor! Alexander rejoiced that *he* lived in an age when there was an Apelles to do his picture; but the fishes may truly rejoice that *they* live in an age when there is a Raphael to do theirs"!!!

I am very sorry to hear of Master Joli-petit's accident, but respect him as an honest dog since I find there are certain things he *cannot* swallow. I congratulate Pattapouffe on her nice warm fluffy name this bitter weather, and to make us feel it

the more we had a Neapolitan day on Sunday for sunshine and warmth. Poor Tibby, too, has been on a three days' visit to Channing (the dog doctor); upon the principle of its being the *last* straw that breaks the camel's back, I suppose it was that last cram of foie gras that upset de dog's digestion. . . .

How does Mme. Bertini get on, or rather off, at Windsor? I hope she has discovered some *screw propeller*! As for Lady Hotham's set, or any one else's, I should not have the least scruple in saying *to* them what I say *of* them, as I never abuse people without just cause, and therefore do so without fear . . . .

Ever sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

February 23, 1856.

À mon tour je vous dis désabusez vous, cher M. Chalon. I *am* as ugly and as stupid, though not as old in *years*, as Mrs. Dizzy; but I have *not* the half of £400, Sir Liar's Paris conspiracy having cost me £700, and his last plot, that drove me out of my poor *chaumière*, about £600 more. To raise these sums, having no earthly security, I had to insure his valuable (!) and my

own worthless life, which with the interest of the money leaves me the munificent sum of £180 a year to live—or rather to exist upon, for it is not *living*. And from this splendid sum the income tax is duly deducted by the meanest monster of ancient or modern times. So I hope you will allow that upon this there is not *de quoi* to afford "Toadies," which must always *be* bought and paid for, if only by *expectations*. Even when I was first turned out of my home, with my beggarly stipend of £400 a year, instead of the first quarter being paid in advance, as is always customary on such occasions, it was not paid for four months after, so that I was in the greatest possible distress; whereupon Mrs. Dizzy, who for eighteen years—from the time I was fourteen—had *professed* the most unbounded friendship for me, and with whom I then corresponded, as she was not at that time married to Dizzy, sent me £20. But my parish allowance arriving on the *same* day, I sent it back to her by return of post with many thanks. Upon the strength of this, I understand the vulgar old wretch boasts to every one of her kindness in having lent me money, which you will own fully qualified her for marrying a Jew! Pray, may I ask when you

spoke to her about the brutalisation I had received from my slave-driver? Fancy biting Dizzy, and being alive after it to tell the story! A liquid black dose is horrible enough, but what *must* a consolidated one be!!

Yes—"Abhorrence and Disgust" will do very well, therefore, as you will perceive by the direction of your letter, in addition to your R.A., I have created you S.A., or Satisfactory Abuser, and I assure you (though in a different way) it requires quite as much genius to be the one as the other. As for "common sense," we are all agreed that it is a *sine quâ non*, but all apt to differ as to what constitutes it: a Scotchman and a Trading Politician think it consists in "getting on" *coûte qu'il coûte*; some in extreme caution; some in hoarding what they can never either want or use, like poor Lady Hotham; and some in spending lavishly to attain an object. For my own part, I rather incline to the opinion of a quaint old writer of the sixteenth century, who makes it consist in a doubt of ourselves and our acquirements; whereupon speaking of pseudo philosophers and *littérateurs* he says, "so much are they possessed with the opinion and presumption of science, that they know not that there is

a kind of ignorance and doubt more learned and more certaine, more noble and generous than all their science and certaintie; this is that which hath made Socrates so renowned and held for the wisest of men, it is the science of sciences, and the fruit of all our studies; it is a modest, mild, innocent, and hartie acknowledgment of the mysticall height of truth, and the pouvertie (poverty) of our humane condition, full of darkness, weakness, uncertaintie. Heere I would tell you that I caused to be graun (graven) our (over) the gate of my small house, that I built at Condom in the yeare 1570, this word: "*I know not.*" At all events, this doctrine is a most consolatory one to us ignoramuses.

I congratulate you upon having Macaulay for a neighbour* (and *vice versâ*). I know nothing of him *personally*, but admire him hugely as a writer, as I think he is indisputably *the* Master Spirit of the Age in Literature. It was his misfortune and not his fault that he should have been at Cambridge with Sir Liar, Praed, Cockburn, FitzGerald, and that gang. I hope you will make his acquaintance and he yours, which

* Macaulay spent his last years at Holly Lodge, Campden Hill, where he died in December 1859. See Note C, p. 311.

proves how well I wish you both, and, moreover, proves my unselfish magnanimity; vû que mon triste métier, c'est de cacher mon exil et de plaindre mon sort, so that my only refuge is in the old Spanish prayer of "Oh! God, keep myself from myself."

What was Mme. Bertini's maiden name? Counter or no Counter, she is a very nice, well-educated little person; but what a funny idea to *marry* to be her own mistress! "Good lack," as Mr. Pepys used to ejaculate, the woman must have been demented. . . .

I herewith return your Protest with many thanks, and protest that I am, dear Mr. Chalon, ever your sincere and *untoadiable* friend (because, like King Clovis's cherubim, "Je n'ai pas *de quoi!*")

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

February 26, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

There is another letter of yours which has arrived wide open; but no wonder, for it was *not* sealed, and these *soi-disant* adhesive envelopes are abominations in every way without sealing-wax. . . .

Mille fois non! cher M. Chalon, I am not

toadied, for if ever I had any good looks, of course at *my* age they are gone and have only left a lying epitaph in my face which gives no idea of what they were. Neither have I any pretensions to wit except in my *anger*, for it is by no means inadvertent folly that makes me so open-mouthed, but well-digested intention. And as for rank!—pray don't insult me if you mean by *that* the beggarly brand-new title with which I am hampered, and which (being of a really good old family on both sides) I feel as a blister and a blot; for my father's family were Titled Fools at the Conquest, and have continued uninterruptedly so to the present day without the plebeian taint of brains having come between them and their nobility; and since the days of the third Edward my mother's family were distinguished in Senate, Church, and State for their wit and the brilliancy of their acquirements. However, much as I have bored you with my affairs—in doing which I do not use you worse than my other friends—you do not yet know *half* the tortures that Fiend has inflicted and is inflicting on me; but, of course, you are naturally prone to contemplate my position with conventional and well-bred apathy—a woman separated from a dissi-

pated husband, and why can't I be quiet and not have the "bad taste" to mention his name, much less to abuse him so incessantly. All this would be perfectly true if the premises were so: but they are not, for, as I before said, *my* case being unique and unparalleled, so must my mode of treating it be, in sheer physical self-defence!

Exposure is the only thing that complex monster dreads, and consequently the only check I have upon him. You, of course, like the rest of the world superficially deciding upon what is of no interest to them, can't conclude why he should "spy" me, and therefore, somewhat illogically jump to the conclusion that he don't! Now the motive is, and ever has been, to *beggar me* in defending myself against his infamy, which he has done most effectually, knowing there is no extinguisher like poverty. But not content with having by this organised system of preventive persecution reduced my pittance to £180 a year, he must *hunt* me with his infamous cast-off mistress spies into *four* removals in the miserable village of Llangollen, and ultimately into getting out of it, *coûte qu'il coûte*, for which I had to borrow £50 from a friend for six months, which I have paid her back by £25 a quarter, a pretty good pull,

you will own, upon my magnificent £45 quarterly dole!—one which, of course, keeps me close within my four walls, and would, if I had not a very kind and considerate landlady, subject me to the most galling humiliations and inconvenience. *That* is the precise purpose for which it is done. The monster tried to intimidate me into silence and passive endurance by reminding me that he had got every shilling of my own little property out of me (only £300 a year), and that what he allowed me was only for *his* life; therefore, I have no doubt that were he to die to-morrow I should be a beggar, but that would trouble me very little, as I then should have no Infernal Machine at work to prevent me earning my bread. False in all else, he is true to the *letter* when he promises a torture or a curse. Years ago he promised he would torture me "*through my children.*" My poor martyred Emily he could *not* pervert, he could only wither up her young life and break her heart, but happier than her mother she succeeded in dying of it. Upon his worthy son he had more congenial materials to work; his game was to make him like himself, an unfeeling, unprincipled intellectual machine. I hear he speaks of his mother (this came from a Harrow friend of his) with the

greatest of affection, but as he has never given any evidence of a single *human* or natural feeling, I can only look upon this as a sample of the loathsome hypocrisy which, of course, has been the chief ingredient of his perverted and unnatural education, and as long as I live I never desire to hear his name, for at the very *least* he is what his mother is *not*, and what she most despises, a craven and a coward. . . .

In short, I can give you no better idea of the fullness of torture with which that Fiend, Sir Liar, has scourged my miserable existence, compassing it with a snare and crowning it with a curse, than by telling you that I should feel amply avenged could *he* for *one week* lead the life he has inflicted on me for years, but *without* the refuge I have of a clear conscience, but on the contrary his *own* as jailer. The incessant and degrading pecuniary struggles alone, which he has entailed upon me, are such as those superior beings, men, blow their brains out under: but women not being so superior are more humble, and therefore endure and pray; and surely no faith can be so strong or so disinterested as that which has *no* hope but what is beyond the grave. Under such an accumulation of great afflictions,

spiked with sharp, petty tortures, I really *should* go mad if I did not leave wrestling with secondary causes, and be *still*, remembering that after all they are but the instruments of omnipotence.

I hope now you will own that people do not, nor cannot, toady a poor wretch in my most wretched position—though it is *so* wretched, so brutally unjust, that even the cold, calculating, selfish, mammon-worshipping English cannot help feeling for and with me. But a thousand pardons for having thus like a man and a political humbug so long

> "Made dear *self* on well-bred ears prevail,
> And *I* the hero of each endless tale."

I wonder you did not roar in that ass Planché's face. I am sure I should, had he attempted to adulate me upon such a supposed burlesque. But don't you know he is just the sort of man to die of a bow from a *Lord* in aromatic pain, though a rose would have no such effect upon him. Faugh! how loathsome these fourth, fifth, and sixth-rate people are; and that's what I feel most in my miserable position, for truly in the whole arsenal of calamity there is nothing so destructive as a *false* position, for false positions may be truly called the calamities of misfortune. Therefore I

heartily wish I could make Mr. Planché a present of my beggarly title, and he might commit as many "Follies of a Night" as he pleased with it, even to be-knighting you! I should have proved to him that I was at least a Knight of the Whistle by whistling him to me with sis! sis! sis! "There Planché, find him! good dog!" and flinging him by the nape of the neck into the pit among those noble puppies he is so fond of. What a pity a Duke of Norfolk cannot have his neck wrung *every* day to give Planché the pleasure of figuring in the tomfoolery of Rouge Croix!* C'était assez polir faire sauter le pauvre décedé jusqu'au plancher!

Adieu, cher M. Chalon. Tib joins in love to de doggies. Ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Out Pensioner of the Knebworth *Union*: *Naught*worth would be a more appropriate name.

The reference to Lady Caroline Lamb in the next letter is of interest when it is remembered that she had had a romantic love affair with

* J. R. Planché, author, dramatist, and an authority on costume, was appointed Rouge Croix Pursuivant in 1854, and Somerset Herald in 1866.

Bulwer. He was twenty-one and she verging on forty, a woman who had been married for twenty years. She looked much younger, however, and Bulwer has related that the chief attraction of this wayward personality—"A creature of caprice, and impulse and whim, her manner, her talk, and her character shifted their colours as rapidly as those of a chameleon"—was her conversation, particularly her recollections of her earlier lover, Byron, who had paid her the compliment of saying, "you are the only woman I know who never bored me."

Lady Caroline Lamb's affair with Bulwer was short-lived and never very serious. The Cambridge undergraduate soon found he was supplanted by a Mr. Russell: "I had wit enough to see that Lady Caroline and this gentleman were captivated with each other. The next morning I had a private conversation with the Lady, which ended in my bidding her farewell."

February 29, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—Like the Anglo-Saxons, you mistake *effect* for *cause*. They do so from never

having but one feeling excited by the misfortunes of others, however deep or complex,—to wit, curiosity: had they a grain of compassion or sympathy, they would be more analytic and discerning. Of course *had* I been a tigress and a devil, *then* I should have treated that monster as you suggest; but unfortunately *then* I was a lamb, a dove, a Griselda, and a fool, turning pale and trembling when I heard his footsteps approaching. It has been his outrageous and unparalleled villainy which, when freed from the cowardly *physical* fear of his vile presence, has turned me into the tigress and devil, which for you and the rest of the spectators of the Wife Hunt forms such an amusing contrast to *his* sweet, gentle, dovey manner and insignificant physique.

You have also got the Almack story wrong. It was at Brocket (Lord Melbourne's) the brute proposed for me and where I refused him twice, and twice after in London; and I recollect, at Brocket, poor Lady Caroline Lamb, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, said, "Whatever you do, *don't* marry Edward Lytton Bulwer, for they are a *bad, bad* set, all of them."

The only thing that ever happened at Almack's was one night that we were dancing, and

George Anson was our *vis-à-vis*: I happened to say to Sir Liar that I did not admire him, adding, "but, indeed, I seldom do admire those men who are called handsome." Whereupon Sir Liar sulked for three days, at the end of which he said that my telling *him* that I never admired men who were called handsome was a *personal* insult to him! I defended myself by saying, "Good Heavens! I never heard any one call you handsome."

It was his vile reptile of a brother, Henry, who laid the charming plot to entrap me into that infamous house in Paris, though of course at his fiend-brother's instigation. I was looking out for a travelling servant (not a courier) to go to Italy, and a paper was left with the porter on which was written: "If Lady Lytton Bulwer will call at such a house, in such a street, she will hear of a most excellent servant." Luckily Sir Henry Webster came in to ask me to dine with them and go to the opera, and said, "Can I do anything for you this morning?" I said, "Yes; as men can better find out the character of men-servants, I'll be much obliged if you'll go to this address and inquire about this one." I had no sooner given him the paper than he said, stamping

his foot, "Who the D——l in H——l has given you this?" I said I did not know, that it had been left that morning with the concierge. Luckily his wife's carriage was at the door; he jumped into it and taking up M. Charles Le Dru, one of my lawyers, they drove to the infamous place, and there saw Henry Bulwer and Fool Howard of the Embassy (the one who married Miss McTavish) walking up and down. I acquit Howard of knowing why he was brought there; but Henry Bulwer was looking about in all directions to see if I would arrive, when of course the game would have been to have turned to Howard in feigned astonishment and have said: "Good Heavens! is it possible? why there's my sister-in-law!" However, he was saved this piece of *diplomacy* by Webster and Le Dru jumping out of the carriage and shaking their clenched fists in his face, muttering, "You infernal blackguard!"

I would have forgiven Sir Liar if he had ever got up an honest conspiracy against me, and brought me into Court upon even a sham *crim. con.*, as public investigation must soon have put that right; but when I brought the wretch into Court for his conspiracy in sending his emissaries into my house to steal my papers, and he wanted to

make out that I as a married woman could *not* bring an action, Berryer, my counsel, said I *could*, having just gained an action for libel against my brother-in-law in London; that I was then under the protection of the Law of France, which did protect married women, and that nothing could stop that trial but Sir Liar's owning, through his counsel in open Court, that it *was* a conspiracy of his, got up to defame his wife—if indeed he liked to resort to such a humiliating alternative as that, then there was an end of the trial, as in no country could a woman proceed against her husband. Rather than let the trial go on and the truth come out, the contemptible reptile did so amid the yells, groans, and hisses of the whole Court, and, I think for one week after, all Paris, English as well as French, German, and Italians, kept calling on me. But as the loathsome monster pursues his system of espionage to this day, it can only be to torture, to obstruct, to degrade, and insult me, for even had I years ago gone off with some man—as a "British Female" inevitably would have done rather than struggle through such difficulties and support herself—*his* conduct has been so unprecedentedly infamous to me, even in pecuniary matters alone, that he

knows in no Court in Europe could he reap anything but shame and exposure, and I triumphant acquittal through the same exposure, as I did the only two times (as the children say) that I succeeded in getting his infamy before a Court of Justice. . . .

Ever, dear Mr. Chalon, yours tigresse, non encore morte aux rats,

ROSINA *BULWER LYTTON* (synonyme de toutes les infamies).

Another thing that should abate the sapient surprise of my "friends" as to my not having begun by being a devil is, that though I am now old I was once young and—thanks to the asinine way women are brought up in this country—totally unfit to cope with such a calculating, disgusting, and at the same time furious-tempered fiend. Besides, in all nature, moral as well as physical, there is sure to be at some time or other a reaction; and as the sweetest wine makes the sharpest vinegar, so the most passive endurers when *too much* outraged, and at length roused, make the most dauntless opponents. Moreover, shall frail humanity be wiser than Omnipotence and Omniscience? And God himself changed his plan. He made man innocent and happy,

and it was not till *after* sin and disobedience that death and sorrow came into the world.

Amen!

Epitaph on a Libertine, from *The Universal Magazine* of 1755, which will do admirably for Sir Liar's, and save me the trouble of being even at that much expense for his obsequies, should I ever have the good fortune to see them:

> "Here lies the vile dust of the sinfullest wretch
> That ever the devil delayed for to fetch;
> Yet all the world will allow 'twas needless he should,
> Since Satan saw he was *coming as fast as he could*."

Although Lady Bulwer Lytton states above that she had won an action against her brother-in-law, Henry Bulwer, it was in reality against *The Court Journal*, which had published an absurd canard to the effect that Lady Bulwer had insulted Henry Bulwer at a public soirée. She obtained a verdict for £50 and costs. There seems no doubt that Henry Bulwer engineered a system of calumny and espionage against his sister-in-law, in Paris, in 1839.

Two attorneys, named Lawson and Thackeray, attempted to corrupt Lady Bulwer's servants, who,

however, remained faithful to their mistress. A trap was arranged, and Lawson was caught in the act of opening a secrétaire where Lady Bulwer's papers were kept. In the resultant trial there was much quibbling about the status of a married woman as plaintiff, with the result that Lady Bulwer was nonsuited. She lodged an appeal, but owing to lack of funds did not prosecute it.

March 4, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

No one ever yet disputed or doubted that *common sense*, properly so called, was the *sine quâ non* of human intelligence, without which all other gifts are *nil*. The only doubt which occasionally arises touching this indispensable attribute is whether in reality we always possess it to as great an extent as we give ourselves credit for doing. Macaulay has said nothing new on *that* subject; Mrs Macaulay, his namesake, who wrote a hundred years ago, says nearly the same in her History of England, though apropos of a different period. And many hundred years before that again, Seneca, Marcus Antonius,

Montaigne, give the *Pas* to common sense—above all other attributes.

Mr. Hyde and several dozens *such* up and down and round about the world are the exceptions which *prove*, not disprove, the rule of men having no moral courage. The opinion is by no means an original one of *mine*, but is an acknowledged psychological fact by most superior and honest men themselves.

M. Bertini was very silly to marry as he did, for surely he could not have lived so long in the world without knowing that a very young, pretty, and attractive girl never does marry an old man *but* for his money; and *cui bono* if it is to be like the Miss Primroses' guinea, only for the honour and glory of the thing, and on no account to be spent?

Cassandra will be believed at last, for there is a capital critique in *Fraser* this month, echoing all I have so long been saying, *i.e.*, that *The Caxtons* are only a restuffed *Tristram Shandy*, and we have only to go across the Channel to find where all his other stolen goods came from.

Ever, dear Mr. Chalon, yours with a *sense* of common sense,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Lady Bulwer Lytton

March 26, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

I should have thanked you yesterday for your kind *envoye* of pretty flowers, but that I had my dear, good Bull-dog and his wife here all day; he being *fanatico per la musica*, I had asked them over to the Madrigal Concert as being the only thing worth coming to here. I had never seen Mrs. Hyde before, but found her an exceedingly agreeable, conversable, well-educated woman; at all events, *sans toute cela*, she would have won my heart from her kindness and sympathy and her love of her gem of a husband. She said to me when he was out of the room after dinner: "Ah! Lady Lytton, you think Charley good, but you cannot imagine even half the goodness that is in that man." Seeing these two kind souls, who really feel for and with me, did me more good than a sail in the Mediterranean. Moreover, Mrs. Hyde has made a perfect Château des Fleurs of my rooms with the enormous basket of magnificent red and white camellias, violets, and lily of the valley she brought me; and my dear Bull-dog's last bark was: "I am now in fighting order again, and hope to take Sebastopol yet—

alias, get an opportunity of thoroughly unmasking that wretch."

Forgive this stupid scrawl, as I got such a terrible cold in church on Sunday and added to it at the concert last night, so that I can from my streaming eyes scarcely see to assure you that I am, dear Mr. Chalon, ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

March 31, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

I am writing by electric telegraph to save—*i.e.*, catch—the post. I want you to decide a bet for me, by which I shall (if right, as I think I am) gain the large sum of £5. However, even should *riches* increase to this amount, I will not "set my heart upon them," build churches, take to gambling, or be guilty of any other *new* folly. Here is the moot point. *I* say that Turner the artist was *not* married (except to mustard plaster skies). My friend says he was: which of us is right? I send you a very kind letter I have just had from Mr. Hyde, who against my monster is as good as an ogre and an ogre's castle to me.

Believe me, in whirlwind haste, ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Lady Bulwer Lytton

April 2, 1856.

Surely, dear Mr. Chalon, you are going to have an aviary of Blue Birds like that charming one the hero of the Comtesse D'Anoi's (not d'Aulnoi's, as the English call her) fairy tale. Despairing of finding a goose to lay me golden eggs, instead of looking blue upon it as I have done, I'll begin to look out for blue eggs.

We have now here "the handsome Crowder," as he is called. I think him frightful—d'abord je deteste (à bon titre) les Blondins. But no wonder, when we have the flower of English profligacy for judges, chancellors, attorney and solicitor-generals, and for legislators, that our ecclesiastical laws should be the iniquitous, barbaric, national disgraces they are. However, if we had more *women* and fewer "Females" in England this would not and could not continue to be the case.

I am surprised about Turner. Où le dévergondage vat'il se nicher? Surely his Fornarina must have been a crocus or a daffodil; for I always suspected that he himself must have been a lineal and direct descendant from the "Madam Turner," *repasseuse* to Queen Elizabeth, so cele-

brated for stiffening her Majesty's ruffs with *bright yellow* starch, and that Turner, in his parsimony, always used up the *débris* of this heirloom for his sunsets.

Tib is calling me to come down to him, and as he is the man of the house I must obey!

In haste, truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

April 13, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

I hope you have got rid of your cough, or you are very ungrateful to this lovely Neapolitan weather. I don't know what *your* lilacs may be doing, but ours are well out in full leaf and will be in flower next week; and as for the hedges—Heaven bless them—they are a perfect galaxy of violets and primroses.

I am sorry you sent my scrawl to Mr. Jones,* imprimis because I have a well-founded horror of all persons, however remotely they may be so, who are *en rapport* with any literary gang or individual. If you live near the rose it gives you its perfume, but if you live near any *littérateur* he will give you nothing but falsehood and

* George Jones, R.A., of 8, Park Square, who was Keeper of the Royal Academy for many years.

blackguardism. . . . With regard to jumping to conclusions, men call us butterflies, so we only use our wings at once to light upon the *very same* point they take a long time crawling up to. Owing to Mr. Jones not dotting his i's (an unpardonable economy of ink by the bye, and only conceivable and excusable in the late Joseph Hume), I cannot make out whether he says Sir Liar is "deified"? Cela se peut bien, as there are infernal deities, of which he is unquestionably the chief. But pray beg of your friend, Mr. Jones, never to speak of the reptile as my "husband," for *that* he has no pretension to being, and all who know me never call the wretch anything but my slave owner. I now send you a "document," which I give you a carte-blanche to show to the whole world, as I have sent copies of it everywhere; cordially despising every phase of English Society, as I do, for its revolting vice, disgusting cant, blasphemous hypocrisy, and universal humbug in morals, politics, literature, and art, I delight in flinging a twelve-pounder into the fetid and stagnant pool of its conventionality whenever I can. So, having no brother to kick Sir Liar from his own den in Park Lane down to the House of Humbugs, and not content

with Mr. Hodgson's receipt for my Parish Allowance, he would also have one from me, I sent him one, and enclose you a copy Pro Bono Publico!*

Ever, dear Mr. Chalon, yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

CASTLE HOTEL,

August 2, 1856.

I am truly sorry, dear Mr. Chalon, to hear that you have suffered in your agricultural interests. Eisenberg† should change his name to Easing-purse; it is all very well that Sir Liar should go to him because it is only right that one barefaced charlatan should patronise another. Moreover *he* can well afford to prove himself an ass for ten guineas if only out of the income tax he so

* "True Copy. Received through Robert Hodgson, Esq., solicitor, of 52, Broad Street Buildings, Bank of England, London, from that ineffable blackguard, Sir Liar Coward Janus Plagiary Allpuff Edward Bulwer Lytton, the disgraceful swindle of £94. 3*s.* 4*d.*, which he doles out to me, his legal victim, as Out Pauper of those Sodom and Gomorrah sinks of iniquity, the Park Lane and Knebworth *Unions*.

"Rosina Bulwer Lytton alas!

"*April* 12, 1856.

"To that loathsome old ruffian Sir E. B. Lytton, Bt., M.P."

† A chiropodist.

honourably deducts from my Parish Allowance; but I am surprised you should have put your foot in it by going to such a quack. If ever you should require any such services again (which I hope you won't), there is a certain Madlle. Jacob at Brighton who operates without being *felt* and only charges five shillings. Though only a Jewess, like the Wandering Jew she travels far and near; being *entre autres* constantly sent for by the poor dear ex-Queen of the French down to Claremont, and to Chatsworth, as his Grace of 'Devonshire, sans doute n'ayant pas le sens commun non plus que le sang commun, is so mortally afraid that any one should extract a single drop of his precious blood that he will not allow any one but her to throw themselves at his very ugly feet. When I was last at Brighton, after one of her returns from Chatsworth he evinced his gratitude by sending her a mezzotint portrait of himself. I told her that notwithstanding their difference of creeds, I thought a copy of *Bunyan's* "Pilgrim's Progress" would have been much prettier and more appropriate. . . . .

Having now finished with *your* feet, I must turn to Mr. Lane's, to whom pray offer my best thanks for his very clever *jeu d'esprit* which, like

your portraits, greatly improves on the original; for *Hiawatha* is solemn, stupid nonsense, whereas Mr. Lane's parody is sparkling, clever nonsense, and he has proved himself a strong fellow in beating Longfellow.

No doubt Mme. Bertini is as merry as a disconsolate widow should be. Were my re-*verses* only equally well capped, I should be equally so. I have been assisting at several executions, vulgo weddings, lately. I see Calcraft is now also "assisted" by a deputy hangman at the other executions.

With Miss Ryves's kind regards, believe me, dear Mr. Chalon, yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

September 11, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

I am sorry by your want of Mr. Hyde to make the quack Eisenberg disgorge to deduce therefrom that you are still suffering with your foot. . . .

No doubt the Noodle FitzDoodles alias Doyles screwed you well, as no people have a keener eye to or livelier sense of their own interests: it is only those of their unfortunate and unprotected relations they can wreck wholesale in the most

liberal manner. The Sir Francis Doyle you had your Wimpole Street house from (*my* wrecker)* was my mother's first cousin; he married a daughter of Sir William Milner, of Nun Appleton, Yorkshire, and *her* maiden sister, Emily Milner, survived, and lived with him, eventually leaving her £30,000 among her nephews and nieces. The *present* booby, also Sir Francis Hastings Doyle, whom you met at Sandgate, is son to the above. His little, silly, selfish, squeaky, British Female of a wife was a niece of Lady Grenville's and daughter of Charles Wynn, who in the House of Commons rejoiced in the sobriquet of Squeak, to distinguish him from his brother, who was called Bubble—the pair making Bubble and Squeak. The poor spendthrift Military Knight of Windsor (lately dead) was Sir John Milley Doyle, my mother's brother.

You have quite destroyed all my respect and admiration for Mr. Lane by telling me that he also is one of that ineffable blackguard, Dr. Wilson's set—a fellow who turned his house into a perfect brothel at Malvern (all the *respectable* people leaving it) to take the woman Beaumont off Sir Liar's hands while he was seducing the

* Her trustee.

Swiss governess ; and the fact of Mr. Lane having made that rotten old ruffian, Sir Liar's, acquaintance at *that* crisis, and going down to Knebworth after, does not redound much to Mr. Lane's credit. Of course a son who is *aux petits soins* to his father's mistresses and treats his mother as Sir Liar Coward Bulwer Lytton's son has done his, *must* be extremely *amiable*, and pre-eminently gentlemanlike : only God keep me from ever encountering *such* amiability, and equally from the contact of those who countenance and admire it. At all events, the world is wide enough to prevent my ever going *via* so very crooked a Lane. T.A.V.

R. Bulwer Lytton.

September 21, 1856.

I am delighted, dear Mr. Chalon, that you find that the hay tea has already done you good, and hope that ere long it will restore you (as it has done me) to your *hey-day !*—for you would not know me since I have been able to walk away from myself ! I have become nearly as slight as I was when a girl, and look altogether so rejuvenated that strangers think I cannot be the real Simon

Pure—Sir Liar's victim—but a Plastron pensioned to perpetuate the rôle in order to torment him, so that if the loathsome brute would but give me the opportunity perhaps I might distinguish myself like Mrs. Susannah *Snookes*! That great fact was as follows and duly recorded in *The Times* about two months ago, when its perusal occasioned me such hysterics of laughter that a doctor had to be sent for to stop them: "On the 5th. instant, Susannah, relict of Lieutenant John Snookes, late of the Royal Marines, to Mr. Samuel Hodges, of Boston, U.S. She had been a widow since 1805."!!!!!—only I should "wear my rue with a difference," for immediately after the Obituary that announced Sir Liar's departure for the Infernal Regions should figure this paragraph: "And three hours after, Rosina, relict of the above, to Phœnix Paragon, Esq., etc."

Apropos of the Devil and all his works, as you say Mr. Lane has had nothing to do with him since his knowledge of Sir Liar's character I must vindicate him (Mr. Lane) with a lady to whom I lent his clever parody, and she returned it to me with these lines: "I would not read anything written by that man who swears by Sir Liar, and who wrote a book with him at that

infamous Dr. Wilson's puffing the Water Cure,* and who in a word was one of that disgraceful Malvern gang of which Sir L. and Mrs. Beaumont were the High Priest and Priestess."

As for the young gentleman's revolting *conduct*, you must allow me, my dear Mr. Chalon, to be the best judge of *that*. No one ever said his *looks* were revolting; but one thing I can assure you of, *i.e.*, if he knelt till Doomsday, no earthly power would ever induce me to take a shilling from so despicable, craven, and unnatural a son,† and were his infamous father but once removed I should have a fair field for earning my own bread, and shall always continue to do so.

You should hear Charles Hyde talk of your *esteemed* friend Alaric Watts. He has one standard anecdote about having saved Alaric the Goth from being crushed to pieces by a printing press, which he invariably concludes

* Bulwer Lytton contributed to *The New Monthly Magazine*, 1845, a sixteen-page article entitled *Confessions and Observations of a Water-Patient*, extolling the benefits he had received at Malvern from Dr. Wilson's system. There is no mention of Lane as joint author of the article.

† In 1874, after the death of her husband, Lady Lytton accepted an additional £200 a year from her son, which, with one interval, was paid for the remaining eight years of her life.

with "May God forgive me for that same," so that you see your Litanies are the same.*

Sincerely hoping that as you are going to Mahomet you may effectually get rid of the Mountain that has oppressed you for the last three months, and be shampooed into a state of semi-beatitude, believe me, dear Mr. Chalon, with Miss Ryves's kind regards,

Very sincerely yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

October 5, 1856.

I am delighted, dear Mr. Chalon, to find that you are luxuriating in a Mahomedan Paradise (the only way in which being in hot water *can* be "made pleasant"), and I hope the aromatic watering pot and its ambrosial irrigations will convert you into an Immortal: *not* that you deserve it for leaving that poor innocent black doggie behind; it would serve you quite right if when him heard the real wheels him never stirred a paw to go and meet you. Tib says if such an iniquitous thing had been done to *him*, him would

* Alaric A. Watts (1797–1864), journalist and author, seems to have been disliked by all his contemporaries. It was Lockhart who bestowed upon him the Hunnic nickname of Attila, and as Alaric Attila Watts he was always known.

have soon packed up him's tail, taken himsefs off, and got a new master, which when a dog is *left*, him is quite *right* in doing.

I think I shall send your Photographical Etching to the Exhibition next year as a "Portrait of Sir B. Moon, by A. E. Chalon, R.A." We have had Mr. and Mrs. German Reed here (Miss P. Horton), and were much amused at her "delineations of character," more especially that of the impayable "Sir John Quill," whom one has so often met and heard in that Reservoir of all possible and unimaginable inanities, London Society. Her voice is most exquisite and as fresh as ever. She sang one or two things from the "Traviata" charmingly in her rôle de Savoyard (sans hurdy-gurdy!)

Don't talk of weather! With *such* a climate how could the English be anything but what they are—half fog, half frost, and ambulating wet blankets. . . .

Ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Lady Bulwer Lytton

November 2, 1856.

En costume du temps,
C'est à dire un Brouillard.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I much doubted the fact of that horror being engraved *on* plaster of Paris, but, having great faith in the fallibility of my own ignorance, I am never positive about anything of which I am not sure; however, la belle Louise (or, according to plaster libel, la laide) having been well plastered de son vivant can afford to be ill-plastered in effigy.

I miss poor Miss Ryves very much now she is gone, though she sends me a telegraphic dispatch every morning of a sprig of myrtle from Torquay; and it is an intervention of Providence that I have to work not only with my head but with my hands, like a galley slave, or I really think I should go mad if I had time to ponder on my unparalleled fate, or leisure to feel my solitude and desolation; but when one has not breathing time one cannot have fretting time, Amen! . . .

As I before told you, dear Mr. Chalon, I fully appreciate the kindness and benevolence of *your* intention, mais quant à moi I never want to hear anything of Sir Liar Coward Janus Allpuff Bulwer

Lytton's worthy son, and would rather not be reminded that I have the misfortune and disgrace of being his nominal mother. Maximus Tyrius, in his dissertation on the origin of evil, wishes that some oracle would explain the difficulty. Pity Maximus Tyrius did not live till now as he would easily have discovered at least the origin of *One* Evil. Tiberius Doatskin, King of de Darlings, Emperor of Fine Eyes, and Duke of Silver Paws, unites with me in best bow-wows to all your doggies, and believe me, dear Mr. Chalon,

Ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

SIBERIA.

November 7, 1856.

I congratulate you, dear Mr. Chalon, on your improved state; marshmallows are excellent things et votre Louis, * un vrai Louis d'or. I agree with you on all you can say touching professional humbug in general and medical humbug in particular—always excepting my dear, good, old Dr. Price, qui est un médecin comme il y aura peu et un homme comme il n'y aura point. I envy you reading anything of Daniel Defoe's, even

* Chalon's Swiss servant.

Robinson Crusoe; but Defoe, with all his wondrous powers and all his wondrous English, was not qualified to write *The History of Disreputable Characters*, as he should have waited till now and known Sir Liar and the rest of the Gore House Gang to have been thoroughly master of his subject.

The Petit St. Pierre il piccolo san Pietro is an old friend of mine. I first made his acquaintance going to Sicily, and envied him his waterproof boots. For persons like myself, fond of the *cinque* and *sei centi*, this is a charming place, as one cannot from the manière d'être of the natives fancy oneself a day beyond those two epochs, the *last* new novels here being *By Anne of Swansea* 1796, and *The Star of Fashion* by Anthony Frederick Holstein, *said* to have killed the Duchess of Devonshire, and I am sure I don't wonder at it. Alas! that arrows barbed with grey goose quills should be no longer mortal in these our days, or I might have a chance; and would out of gratitude ever after wear the feather in my cap had I but *the* cap of caps to wear it in.

Ever, dear Mr. Chalon, yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

November 18, 1856.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—Victoria! I congratulate you on your triumph. I always thought Mr. Hyde a *duck* of a man, and shall now think so more than ever since he has conquered the *quack*.* If a few more of his dupes would give the said Charlatan the good *hiding* (as they say in this part of the world) that you have done, he would soon have to abandon the *corn* market and confine himself entirely to his *pied à terre* in the Haymarket. Did the affair go into court?—or how did the Hydes make him disgorge? Was it—as they do the leeches—by smothering him with salt? Apropos not certainly of salt, but of sovereigns, the *on dit* is the Queen has written a book and is going to publish it; were she capable of *writing* it, no doubt she would be capable of the minor offence of publishing. Again congratulating you upon your Victory, believe me, Post Haste, dear Mr. Chalon,

Yours truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Lady Bulwer Lytton's letters to Chalon—if any were written—during the next three years

* Eisenberg, the chiropodist.

are missing from the present collection, although these years were eventful for her. Only four more letters remain to bridge this long hiatus, and then the correspondence is closed by Death.

TAUNTON,

March 17, 1860.

DEAR MR. CHALON,—I was very sorry not to have had the pleasure of seeing you on my flying visit, or rather corvée, to Town the other day, and still more sorry for the cause. My friend also was much disappointed, car comme toutes les célébrates, you know, you are open to *invasion*. I am very glad, however, to find that your own bulletin is much better than the verbal one we received.

Quant à votre brave homme de Louis—où il est tant soit peu persifleur comme son maître?—où il a bien besoin de lunettes, car certes les infâmes et les tracasseries de tous genres ne rajeunisse pas! Cagliostro même ne l'a jamais prétendu.

De most heart-rending accounts of Fansy Pansy's despair when she found I was gone—came to my door, howled, and cried real *tears*, and converted him's paws into a pocket-handker-

chief. But you should have seen the meeting when she came moaning to my bedroom door this morning, and I called to her to come in. The paws were round my neck in a moment, nearly choking me, and de dog was positively in hysterics. . . .

I feel as if broken on the wheel from over fatigue, for we only got back here at 3 o'clock this morning by the mail train : but *sleep* is out of the question for the din is terrific, the Castle Green being covered with Shows, on account of the Assizes which commence on Monday. And *just* under my windows—either as a *pendant*, *mauvaise plaisanterie*, or *devise parlante ?*—is exhibited "The wonderful Man Mountain," accompanied by an equally mountainous big drum, while in the rear is "The Insatiable Bengal Tiger," who does all his roaring to sound of gong, and in front of his Bengalore is a gaunt young lady, like a skewer in an atrophy, screaming out in a shrill falsetto, to the wheezings of an asthmatic accordion, "Wilt thou love me then as now ?"—about the same I should think.

How very sad about poor Julien, and how *very* English to have attempted to do nothing to help him till it was *too late.*

Pray get well soon—to welcome this beautiful weather—and believe me, dear Mr. Chalon,

Ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

March 24, 1860.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

Now that you can eat, sleep, and above all paint, I think I may safely congratulate you upon having weathered the storm, and upon being no longer *even* a "Malade Imaginaire." Not so your correspondent: the wheezing is so dreadful, occasioned by the tightness of my chest, that it is exactly as if I had a litter of pups or kittens whining piteously for their mother whom they only knew too well was out! This said *tightness* of the *chest* I must have got, with every other ill, by marriage, as most decidedly none of my family, either on my father's or mother's side, ever were troubled with anything of the sort, but on the contrary rather suffered from enlargement of the heart, a most troublesome and generally fatal complaint in this world. Apropos of the former fashionable epidemic, go where one will, people are never tired of des-

canting on the Queen's and Lord Westminster's* —I suppose what Lord Shaftesbury would call—*saving grace*, but what unregenerate mortals call disgraceful saving. When the housekeeper at the Great Western Hotel came up to know if I was satisfied with the arrangements, getting upon the topic of domestic economy, naturally brought her upon that *ne plus ultra* of thrift, poor Lord Westminster; and she told me it was a positive fact that, when he had people staying at Eaton, he always lagged behind in the breakfast-room to *scrape* off the bits of butter left on each plate to have them made into fresh pats! I said yes, everybody knew that all *scraping* came very pat to him. But *sans rire how* disgusting!

As this is an age of testimonials, decidedly we antiques ought to present your Louis† with a valuable chronometer. How Mrs. Tyler will laugh when I tell her his verdict: "Jolie, oui, grasse, oui—mais jeune! C'est une grande mère de quelques années, son petit fils ainé ayant dix ans." But I always tell her she looks so disreputably young, particularly of an evening with

* Second Marquis of Westminster (1795–1869), and father of the first Duke.

† Chalon's old Swiss servant.

diamonds in her very black hair and on her very white neck, that she is a disgrace to our respectable Veteran Battalion. Her daughters are very pretty, *sur tout* the three married ones. She is a dear, good little soul and I'll send her to see you some day that Louis may gain a *wrinkle*, which, however, he won't find on her face.

I fear had I said anything about Hel Retiro they would have driven me to Sir L.'s at once, for his Retiro *must* be a perfect hell. Hoping that you will now go on and prosper without, however, eating so as to cause a famine in London, believe me, dear Mr. Chalon, ever truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

TAUNTON,
April 13, 1860.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

I was glad to hear you had been to a concert, and were none the worse for it notwithstanding the mustard plasters . . . I am not now going to entertain you with myself and my sufferings—a subject upon which all are said to be fluent and none agreeable, more especially as I fully earned my relapse by the unwonted dissipation of three

dinner parties in one week, at one of which I met a charming captain of the 9th Lancers, who had just returned from India, and whom the host asked leave to introduce to me, saying he was one of my warmest and most indignant champions; and having killed eleven Sepoys at Lucknow with his own hand, felt a strong inclination to go to Park Lane and do a little amateur murder on my account. I said I hoped the honest man would by no means baulk himself in so laudable a wish.

Last Thursday week, April 5, Giorno Felice! the great event of the year happened. Master Daisy, my new Doatskin, arrived from Blenheim. So *perfect* a little booty never was seen, nor ever imagined out of a fairy tale; so small I can put him in my muff, beautifully marked with dark cinnamon-coloured spots, a coat that I can only compare to chinchilla or moleskin, for velvet or satin are harsh to it; eyes as black as jet and as brilliant as diamonds; little jet-black ebony nose; magnificent niagaras of ears in clusters of grape-like curls trailing on the ground; and added to all this the sweetest temper and most darling ways in the world. When the Duchess of Marlborough saw what a perfect booty him was she wanted, right or wrong, not to let him come

away : but it serves her right, she should not let the Duke be such a churlish Herod as to have nearly all these Doatskins destroyed so that no one else should have the breed. Twenty-five pounds were offered for this little koh-i-noor of a dog *before* even him had the distemper, so you may guess how I value my *present!* The whole household are perfect fools about him, and him's wondrous beauty has made such a sensation in Taunton, that people drive in from the country, not acquaintances of mine but strangers, asking to be let to see him. Him such very clever little dog too, quite fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, for in order to repair Mr. Gladstone's extraordinary oversight about the rags, he endeavours to convert every article of him's Mud's wearing apparel into lint. Hims would make an invaluable critic for *The Saturday Review,* him does so tear books to pieces and make such biting remarks upon them. Feeling I shall so soon have a daisy quilt, and wishing to secure a friend among those innocent little denizens, I have christened him Daisy.

I hope you have been to the opera, and that the weather behaves better in London than it does here, for my doctor gives me no hope of being

able to go out while it lasts, it being the very facsimile of a cold, raw, foggy, and particularly detestable November. This is a great disappointment to me, as I wanted to introduce my youngest son to his relations, the other Daisies in the Priory Meadows.

Here is the last thing I have heard of their Imperial Majesties: "Why are the Emperor and Empress of the French the most *sleepless* couple in Europe?" "Because in five years they have had but *one little Nap!*"

Hoping you are now quite well, and no longer *à la tartare*, with love to your dogerie and caterie,

Believe me, dear Mr. Chalon, very truly yours,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

April 17, 1860.

DEAR MR. CHALON,

. . . Certainly next to English selfishness, English apathy is about the most monstrous and disgusting thing in the world. Did you read that terrible account in yesterday's *Times* about the poor mad woman at the Abergaveney Races jumping into the Usk, and the assembled crowd, with true English imperturbability, continuing coolly to look on at the races. I am afraid the

millionaire Lord Tredegar ruined himself by collecting £20 to give the one poor, brave, unselfish man who plunged in and saved the poor maniac's life at the imminent risk of his own.

Alas! dear Mr. Chalon, I fear there is no chance of my introducing the King of the Doatskins to you this year, for though I have three very agreeable and tempting invitations to London for May, June, and July, yet the dishonest swindlings of my bashaw have put me to such expense to try and obtain my right, which there is *no* doing without public exposure in that quarter, that I am ground down till I have not the means of going anywhere (and *that* is precisely what it is done for); and I always find visiting *the* most expensive thing in the world.

Not being a poet, I do not excel in fiction. But as like a proper "British Female" I never have "my dear husband" out of my head, here is all that I have been able to achieve for your *bouts-rimés*.

La Guillotine même (quoique sans trop de faste) a sa toilette,
C'est dans cette galère, ou bateau;
Que je voudrais déployer l'écriteau
De celui à qui j'ai bien parlé à sa barrette.

Remember me to la jolie et attrayant Mme. Bertini, et avec mille tir oreilles et baise-pattes à meseigneurs vos chiens, et aussi de la part de sa majèsté tres bijou Daisy,

Believe me, dear Mr. Chalon,

Yours very truly,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Six months later Alfred Chalon died, and Lady Bulwer Lytton lost one of her most faithful friends. He had reached the age of eighty, and his death broke a link with the past as well as leaving a gap in the artistic and social circles of London, for he and his brother had entertained largely during a period of sixty years. Alfred Chalon had intended to leave his beautiful home, "El Retiro," at Campden Hill, with all his valuable collections of pictures, china, and other works of art, to the nation, and he had appointed his two old servants to act as caretakers. But from an unfortunate superstition that he would die soon after completing his will he put off that essential act, and when he did die, somewhat suddenly, the will though signed was unwitnessed.

ALFRED EDWARD CHALON, R.A.
Drawn by G. R. Ward from the portrait by J. J. Chalon, R.A.

Consequently all the property went to the next of kin, a watchmaker living in Switzerland, who, caring nothing for art collections, sold everything, and the house too. The latter has been demolished, and the site is covered with smaller houses.

Lady Bulwer Lytton wrote to Dr. Price on October 5th, 1860: "I had a great shock yesterday in receiving a letter in an unknown hand, with an enormously broad black edge. It was to announce the death on that morning, the 3rd inst., of poor Mr. Alfred Chalon, the painter."

And on the 17th, she continued:

"You will say there is no end to my luck when I tell you that I had a letter from a lady who tells me Mr. Chalon had made a will, and she believes had left me two or three thousand pounds; but owing to his having made it himself, and it not having been witnessed, it is invalid, and all his beautiful pictures, instead of going as he left them, will be sent to the hammer. But what I think far worse, his poor, old faithful Swiss servant, who had worn out his life with him, will be left unprovided for."

Although in her letters Lady Bulwer Lytton constantly expressed the hope and belief that a speedy death would be her happy portion, she was destined to outlive for many years Chalon and all the friends of her youth and meridian. Perhaps this was not the least of her sorrows—it is the sad fate of every one who lives to be old to see "our friends drop by the way, and leave in our minds the flickering rushlight of them in memory," as Meredith wrote.

It only now is necessary briefly to relate the more important events of Lady Bulwer Lytton's remaining years. In 1857, she published a pamphlet entitled *Lady Bulwer Lytton's Appeal to the Justice and Charity of the English Public*, which, in addition to recounting fully all her troubles and her charges against her husband, was a frank appeal for financial help, for in this work it was stated that copies of her book, *Very Successful*, would be sent on receipt of £1. 11*s*. 6*d*.—"as amid modern progressions there are yet no workhouses for the destitute wives of rich men, Lady Bulwer Lytton, as her

last hope, trusts this appeal to public charity will not be made in vain."

In 1858, her chronic obsession was rendered more acute by the honour which fell to Bulwer Lytton on his appointment as Colonial Secretary in Lord Derby's Administration. Bulwer Lytton, of course, had to seek re-election at Hertford, and his wife resolved upon the lamentable step of publicly denouncing him to his constituents. Accompanied by her landlady at Taunton, Mrs. Clarke, Lady Bulwer Lytton travelled post through the night and arrived at Hertford at five in the morning. Here is her account of what took place at this unprecedented scene on June 8th, 1858 :

" The moment I drove into the field the mob began to cheer ; and even Sir Liar's two powdered flunkeys, and both his postillions, took off their hats and caps, and joined. I instantly alighted, and walked to the hustings, just putting the crowd aside with my fan, and saying, ' My good people, make way for your member's wife.' They then began to cheer, and cry, ' Silence for Lady

Lytton!' Sir Liar's head fell *literally* as if he had been shot; . . . . he staggered against the post, and seemed not to have strength to move. I then said, in a loud, calm, and stern voice, 'Sir Edward George Earle Bulwer Lytton, as I am not in the habit of stabbing in the back, it is to *you*, in the first instance, that I address myself. In the step your cruelty and your meanness have driven me into taking this day, I wish you to hear every word I have to say; refute them if you can, deny them if you dare.' Then, turning to the crowd, I said, 'Men of Herts! if you have the hearts of men, hear me!' 'We will. God bless you! Speak out.' Here Sir Liar, with his hands before his face, made a rush from the hustings. The mob began to hiss, and cry, 'Ah, coward, he's guilty; he dare not face her,' which he must have had the *pleasure* of hearing, for, instead of attending the public breakfast in the Corn Exchange, he bolted from the town, and left them all in the lurch."

Elated by at last having a large audience sympathetic to her wrongs, Lady Bulwer

Lytton seems to have thrown all dignity and restraint to the winds, and to have enjoyed thoroughly her dramatic performance on the hustings. One cannot be surprised that poor Bulwer Lytton fled from such a painful and unparalleled situation. His wife then proceeded to harangue the crowd upon all those grievances —some real, some imaginary — with which the correspondence in this book has so largely dealt. She began with her enemy the Press, then narrated her husband's offences, then the painful history of her daughter's death, then her own financial position, concluding her oration with the apology that "unaccustomed as *I really was* to public speaking, I was unable to favour them with any of those oratorical gymnastics they were accustomed to be astounded by in the right honourable baronet, the new Colonial Secretary. (Renewed roars of laughter.) I then concluded with a short parody of Lord Lyttelton's well-known lines—

> If on *my* statements some few doubts should fall,
> Look in *his* face, and you'll believe them all.

'We do, we do, we do! God bless you Lady Lytton; you'll have your rights yet; and you'll see that the men of Herts *have* the hearts of men.'"

Accompanied by the cheering mob, Lady Bulwer Lytton repaired to the Mayor's house. After directing that the money received from the sales of her *Appeal* pamphlet during the day should be given to the local poor, she made another Royal Progress to the station—"the crowd was dense, every window full, and on the tops of the houses the people waving their caps and handkerchiefs, and crying 'God bless you! God prosper you, brave noble woman! You'll defeat the wretch yet.'" She reached Taunton again on Wednesday, June 9.

Enraged and irritated to frenzy by his wife's wretched faux pas, Bulwer Lytton was goaded into taking en revanche a far more culpable step—an attempt to incarcerate his wife in an asylum. On the morning of June 12, there arrived at Lady Bulwer Lytton's bedroom door an inquisition consisting of Mr. Hale Thomson, formerly connected with Westminster Hospital; Dr. Woodford, of Taunton;

Mr. Loaden, the legal agent of Bulwer Lytton; and a woman keeper from a local asylum. There was a great scene with the landlady, who stood guard over her guest; finally the medical men were allowed to see Lady Bulwer Lytton, and after a prolonged examination they were obliged to admit that the lady certainly was not mad. According to Lady Bulwer Lytton's account, Mr. Thomson then asked what terms she would accept for giving an undertaking not to expose her husband again publicly. She named her terms—financial and otherwise—and required an answer within a few days. Not receiving one, ever impetuous, she resolved to go to London and demand it in person; she duly made an appointment with Mr. Thomson, and upon this occasion Bulwer Lytton was so ill-advised as to have his wife forcibly detained and removed to a private establishment for the mentally deficient at Inverness Lodge, Brentford. This gross outrage occurred at Mr. Hale Thomson's house, 4, Clarges Street, on June 22, and Lady Bulwer Lytton thus described the circumstances that attended it:

"After being kept waiting more than half an hour, he (Thomson) made his appearance . . . and soon after him stalked into the room a tall, raw-boned Scotchman, with hay-coloured hair, who I subsequently learned was an apothecary of the name of Ross, keeping a druggist's shop in Fenchurch Street (another friend of Loaden's), and the second, with Thomson, who signed the certificate of my insanity, he never having seen me, or I him, before. . . . Finding I was to get no answer about the letter from Thomson, I said to Miss Ryves and Mrs. Clarke, 'Come, don't let us waste any more time in being fooled and insulted here; we'll go.' Easier said than done, for on reaching the hall we found it literally filled with two mad doctors, that fellow Hill, of Inverness Lodge, Brentford, his assistant . . . two women-keepers . . . and a very idiotic looking footman of Thomson's with his back against the hall-door to bar egress. Seeing this blockade, I exclaimed, 'What a set of blackguards!' to which Mr. Hill, wagging his head, replied, 'I beg you will speak like a lady, Lady Lytton.' 'I am treated so like

one that I certainly ought,' I answered. . . . Seeing a side door ajar that led into a back room I looked in, and there saw those two precious scoundrels, Sir Coward Bulwer Lytton and his attorney Loaden. Boldly advancing towards him, 'You cowardly villain,' I said, 'this is the second time I have confronted you this month. Why do you always do your dirty work by deputy?' At this he rushed as he had done from the Hertford hustings . . . down Mr. Hale Thomson's kitchen stairs and up his area steps into the street. . . . The hall door was opened, and two policemen were brought in, at which I rose to my feet and said, 'Don't presume to touch me! I'll go with these vile men, but the very stones of London will rise up against them and their infamous employer.' At the advent of the policemen I got into Hill's carriage, which was in waiting, he, the two keepers, Mrs. Clarke, and myself inside, and the impudent-looking snub-nosed assistant on the box. The creature took me through the Park, and as there had been a breakfast at Chiswick that day, it was crowded.

Many whom I knew kissed their hands in great surprise to see me."

It is needless to quote Lady Bulwer Lytton's long account of her incarceration and annoyances at Inverness Lodge, where, however, she only remained a little over three weeks, for a public outcry was raised against this despotic and illegal detention of a sane—if abnormally excited—woman at the behest of an irritated husband. Taunton, whose inhabitants had come to like and respect the lady dwelling among them, was the first to make a protest. A meeting was held on July 6, at the Castle Hotel, when it was resolved that Lady Bulwer Lytton's incarceration called for "a public expression of alarm for the rights and liberties of the subject, and that a committee be appointed to watch the case." A week later a long statement of Lady Bulwer Lytton's Case appeared in *The Somerset County Gazette*, and on July 15 *The Daily Telegraph* took up the matter in a very trenchant manner, observing in the course of a lengthy article :

"Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton has succeeded in

hushing up the scandal of his wife's arrest and conveyance to a madhouse at Brentford. The matters in dispute, so say the persons interested, will be arranged to the satisfaction of all concerned. For the sake of the lady herself, the public will rejoice that such a compromise has been extorted from the Secretary of State; if the victim be content, no one has a right to complain, but it must be remembered that Sir Bulwer Lytton alone has gained by the suppression of inquiry. We are now told that he will seal a treaty of perpetual truce with the woman who was, apparently under his instruction, dragged by policemen into a carriage, hurried to a lunatic asylum, and there compelled to sign a compact of forbearance towards the individual by whom, according to her statement, she had been grossly and flagitiously wronged. It is with pleasure we record that this ignominious family war has been terminated, and the accusation of insanity has been abandoned; that Lady Lytton is confessedly qualified to treat with her husband upon terms of equality."

To this, Mr. Robert B. Lytton, the son, replied that the statements in the public press were exaggerated and distorted, and that he had conducted every arrangement his affection could suggest for the benefit of Lady Lytton, adding: "My mother is now with me, free from all restraint, and about, at her own wish, to travel for a short time, in company with myself and a female friend and relation." There was also made public a medical certificate which diplomatically endeavoured to placate the two protagonists of this lamentable tragedy:

"To Edwin James, Esq., Q.C.

"Having at your request examined Lady B. Lytton this day as to her state of mind, I beg to report to you that in my opinion it is such as to justify her liberation from restraint.

"I think it but an act of justice to Sir Edward B. Lytton to state that upon the facts which I have ascertained were submitted to him, and upon the certificates of the medical men whom he was advised to consult, the course which he has pursued throughout these painful proceed-

ings cannot be considered harsh or unjustifiable.

"I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

"FORBES WINSLOW, M.D., D.C.L.

"23, Cavendish Square, July 16, 1858."*

Lady Bulwer Lytton was accordingly released from detention at Brentford on July 17, and two days later crossed to France with her son, with whom, for a brief time, she found happiness in the beautiful country of the Pyrenees; she wrote from Luchon—"If you knew how thoroughly happy I am . . . for my dear boy is never tired of repeating to me that I am now his sole object in life, and, God knows, his every act proves it."† Unfortunately this state of affairs was only to last for a few weeks. The same "incompatibility of temper" that cursed husband and wife seems soon to have sundered mother and son. The latter stated afterwards that, contrary to agreement,

* Further articles on this matter will be found in *The Daily Telegraph*, July, 1858.

† Mr. W. E. A. Axon has pointed out in *Notes and Queries* that in the Wigan Public Library there is a book of views of Luchon, bearing the autographs of Rosina Lady Lytton and her son and the following words on the flyleaf: "Souvenir

Lady Bulwer Lytton attempted to undermine his affection for his father; and Lady Bulwer Lytton asserted that she had been deceived in the arrangements made at the time of her release and that she had never seen the letters published in the press. Whatever the cause, Mr. Lytton suddenly left his mother at Luchon. She saw him once more, in Paris on her way home, and after that they never met again, although the mother lived for twenty-four solitary years longer.

On October 23, 1858, Lady Bulwer Lytton returned to her faithful friend Mrs. Clarke, at the Castle Hotel, Taunton, and the inhabitants

of *our* Honeymoon on the aniversary (*sic*) of *your* Wedding Day, August 29, 1858. Bagnierès de Luchon. ROBERT LYTTON.

Together thro' the mountain pass
We watched the torrent flow,
The rock above how high it was,
How deep the gulf below.

. . . .

But you and I belov'd were not
So bent on elevation,
As arm-in-arm in that sweet spot,
To wish to change our station."

There are five verses altogether, which scarcely adumbrate the fine and graceful style of "Owen Meredith."

of the town were so delighted at her return that it was only by her urgent entreaty that she was not given a public reception and her carriage drawn by the crowd from the station. The first day, however, that she went out, the people gathered with cries of welcome and "God bless your ladyship," and the bells were rung.

The next few years passed amid a sordid conflict for the payment of her debts and a settlement of her affairs in general. Although she became a peeress in 1866, on the creation of her husband's barony, her actual income was often only about £244, as her annuity was depleted by ruinous interest due on loans and other charges. Lord Lytton died in 1873, and with her husband's death it is to be hoped that ever active, implacable hatred which had seared Lady Lytton's brain for nearly forty years gave place to calmer, and perchance regretful, feelings. There is some ground for this belief in the action she took upon the disgraceful publication, in 1880, of a book entitled *A Blighted Life*, which was an account of her

wrongs and imprisonment she had written, in 1866–67, for a literary man who said he was planning a work exposing the dangers and evils of illegal incarceration in madhouses. This book was never issued, and Lady Bulwer Lytton's manuscript was returned to her. But a copy had been taken evidently, for, as related above, it was published in 1880 without Lady Lytton's knowledge or sanction, and with her name on the title-page. She issued a pamphlet of protest at this outrage, recounting the history of the matter, and asserting that the manuscript had never been intended for publication as it stood, and had been merely a hasty compilation of notes for the perusal of the intended author of the work on the evils of the asylum system.

In 1874, Lady Lytton removed to Upper Norwood, and in 1875 she went to live in a small house called Glenômera, Upper Sydenham, where her remaining years were passed. The accusers and stern judges of Lady Lytton's conduct can scarcely have realised all the bitter sadness of her latter life. Hating husband and only son, lavish-

ing her starved affections on dogs, and hiding a breaking—broken—heart behind the obviously faulty armour of strained wit and vulgar abuse of her enemies, the spectacle is appalling in its unredeemed tragedy. The very contrast, merely, in her way of life is terrible. Compare the days when she reigned a queen of beauty and wit in Hertford Street and Paris, surrounded by countless admirers and acquainted with all the most notable personalities in London and Continental Society, and those final thirty years dragged out in exile and ill-health in the country inns of Llangollen and Taunton,* and the end in a small suburban villa. Here, at Sydenham, as Miss Devey relates, "she rarely left her room, and the house only once during the last five years. Naturally of a too generous disposition, wholly unselfish, and frequently left to the care of a

* Of the life at Taunton, a friend of Lady Lytton's wrote: "All there is on the lowest scale of country-townism. She says it is terrible to contrast this life with what her early years were, when she lived amongst and mixed in all that was high and courtly, not only in social position but in intellectual life. At Louis Philippe's Court she was ever most welcome; the Queen Amélie took her especially to her *heart*."

servant who was equally unable to comprehend or to supply her requirements, she could hardly have lived so long had it not been for friends who commiserated her neglected and desolate condition, and tried to alleviate her sorrows and to supply what were really necessities by assisting her to the utmost of their ability. Although in her eightieth year, she possessed to the last the remains of a beauty that had been so noted in her youth. Neither her general tone nor manners had deteriorated through adversity, but remained to the last as distinguished as they were polished and winning. She was full of anecdote and wit, and though not reticent on the subject of her wrongs, she never failed to impress upon her hearers a feeling of sadness and regret that so much capacity for all that was loving and affectionate had been so ruthlessly destroyed by neglect, wrong, and persecution."

The end came somewhat suddenly on March 12, 1882, when Death gave release to one who was very weary with much mental and bodily suffering and surfeit of sorrow. Lady Lytton

was buried in the churchyard of St. John, at Shirley, in Surrey, and the funeral was attended by a solicitor representing the son, Lord Lytton; the Rev. Freeman Wills (a distant relative); Mr. Ancona (a friend); and the Misses Devey. These two ladies were faithful friends, and Lady Lytton's sole heirs and executrices; they were subsequently buried near her in Shirley churchyard. In her will Lady Lytton expressed the wish that these words should be inscribed on her tombstone:

> "The Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve" (Isaiah xiv. 3).*

. . . .

An impulsive, impetuous woman of ever

* No stone has ever been placed over Lady Lytton's grave, which is covered by a grass mound: but immediately east of it is the vault of the Misses Devey, and here is inscribed: "In Loving Memory. In the grave immediately west of this stone lie the remains of Rosina, Dowager Lady Lytton, widow of the first Baron Lytton, of Knebworth"—followed by the dates of birth and death, and the text that is given above.

In Shirley Church is a beautiful oak Altar given by Miss Devey in memory of her friend Rosina, Lady Lytton.

varying moods, Lady Lytton's letters have demonstrated the warring qualities of her character: at one moment indulging in the bitterest and most scandalous abuse of a real or fancied enemy, and in the next sentence revealing a warm heart full of sympathy for some suffering person and an extreme devotion for birds and animals. With many fine redeeming qualities, it is certain she was neither mad nor bad to the degree her enemies represented. She was the victim of malign circumstances, her nature was warped by afflictions, and she never had a fair chance of happiness. Thus was a fine character brought to shipwreck, and a beautiful woman intended for love and joy pitilessly immolated on the altar of Tragic Fate.

NOTES

A : page 170. Apparently Bulwer Lytton never had much admiration for Tennyson's poems. For instance, he wrote, in 1852, of the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* : "Sad stuff seems Mr. Tennyson's long-winded howl."

B : page 190. Concerning Lady Bulwer Lytton's anecdote of Lady Cork's parrot, it may be noted that Mrs. E. M. Ward, in her *Reminiscences*, has a somewhat similar story about A. E. Chalon himself : "On the very day of our visit to Alfred Chalon's studio, his dog Pedro, a cross-grained poodle, bit a gentleman, and on the latter complaining, Alfred coolly replied, 'Poor Pedro ! he has bitten the wrong person, some one else must have teased him.'"

C : page 246. Two days after Lady Bulwer Lytton had expressed the hope that Macaulay and Chalon would be friends as well as neighbours on Campden Hill, the artist received the following letter :

"*February* 25, 1856.

"SIR,—I am very sensible of your kindness and shall be most happy to see you when we are neighbours. I hope I shall be able to dispense with the service of a yard dog !

"I have the honour to be,

"Your faithful friend,

"T. B. MACAULAY."

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